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A CENTURY OF EMPIRE

1801–1900

VOL. II



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Princess Victoria & the Duchess of Kent.

from the painting by Sir William Beechey

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1910

A CENTURY OF EMPIRE

1801–1900

BY

THE RIGHT HON.

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART.

F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D.

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"*Whether this portion of the world were rent*
By the rude Ocean from the Continent,
Or thus created, it was sure designed
To be the sacred refuge of mankind."

WALLER.



IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II. 1833–1868

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LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

1910

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A CENTURY OF EMPIRE

1801–1900

CHAPTER I

The grievance of Irish tithes—Meeting of the Reformed Parliament—Irish Church Bill introduced—Irish Coercion Bill introduced—The anti-slavery agitation—Stanley's Act abolishing slavery—Liberation of negro apprentices—The humanitarian impulse—"Humanity" Martin's Act against cruelty to animals—Miseries of child labour in factories—First step in Factory Legislation—Robert Owen and the Second Factory Act—Michael Sadler Factory Bill—Lord Ashley's Factory Bill—Appointment of a Royal Commission on Factories—The Factories Act Amendment Act, 1833—The Factories Act Amendment Act, 1844—Mr. Fielden's Ten Hours Bill—Factories Acts Consolidation Act—Factory and Workshops Act—Dwelling-house legislation.

THE House of Commons had affirmed by large majorities that its authority was derived from a corrupt source and that it was in no true sense representative of the people. The Reform Act had swept away its foundation, substituting a broader one whereon to build a new chamber of a genuine character. Nevertheless, time must be had to prepare the new registers, and there were urgent matters that would brook no delay in settlement.

Chief among these was a terrible recrudescence of sedition in Ireland, with even more than the usual accompaniment of violent crime. The disturbing cause was a legacy from an age when it was held to be a primary obligation upon rulers to prescribe the precise creed which the people should profess, and to lay upon them the burden of supporting the clergy of that creed. The Act of 1829 had, indeed, relieved the Roman Catholic majority in Ireland from their civil disabilities, but had not touched their grievance in being compelled to pay tithes to an alien and detested Church. It had long been admitted that this

was an honest grievance. Parliament had legislated upon it in 1822 and 1823, enabling landowners to take the tithes on lease from the tithe-owners and voluntarily to compound for them; but these enactments, being of an optional kind, had been very partially carried into effect. In the bitter sense of injustice engendered by this perennial impost O'Connell recognised the most powerful lever in his agitation for repeal of the Union.

The grievance of Irish tithes, 1831–1833.

Closely associated with the tithe question was that of land tenure, a chronic source of discord in a country where agriculture was virtually the only industry, and agricultural land had been subdivided into very small holdings. O'Connell counselled "passive resistance" to the tithe collector; but none can have known better than he how inapt was the qualifying adjective to resistance as understood by his countrymen. Throughout the year 1831, secret societies multiplied in the land. In the whole of Leinster, and in parts of the other provinces, the peasantry were organised as Alts, Terrys, Whitefeet, Blackfeet, Regulators, and—grimly ironical—Pacificators. A system of terrorism was set up with which the forces of the Crown, civil and military, were powerless to cope. Law was paralysed, for no witness of a crime dared to give evidence against the perpetrator, and country gentlemen preferred to submit to heavy penalties rather than serve on juries. One example may suffice to illustrate a condition of society with which readers of Irish history are too painfully familiar. In December 1831 a body of police, protecting a process-server at Hugginstown in Kilkenny, were penned between high walls by an armed crowd. The process-server was killed; out of thirty-eight policemen, eleven were killed and sixteen were wounded by pikes and fusillade. Warrants were issued against twelve persons engaged in this massacre. Two of them escaped; four were put on their trial, of whom three were acquitted, the jury disagreeing about the fourth. The Attorney-General, refusing to prolong the farce, abandoned the case against the rest. Men who had the hardihood to purchase cattle at a sale in distraint, either for tithe or landlord's rent, might be thought lucky

if only the beasts were maimed or slaughtered. In many cases the bargain entailed loss of life or limb. In Queen's County alone sixty murders were committed within twelve months. Anarchy and terrorism were supreme over a great part of Ireland. The Government attempted to stem them by proclaiming certain districts under the Insurrection Act and by appointing a special commission to try malefactors; but the only effect was to multiply collisions between the police and the people, in which many were killed on both sides.[1] Consequently, "improvements in the laws respecting tithes" was mentioned in the King's Speech as one of the "first duties" of Parliament when it met in December 1831. Committees of both Houses were appointed at once, both of which reported in favour of "a complete extinction of tithes" by commuting them for a charge upon land, or by an exchange for an investment in land. In accordance with these reports a Bill was carried, advancing £60,000 for the temporary relief of those Protestant clergy whose incomes had disappeared in the agitation, and empowering the Government to collect the outstanding arrears. At the same time a pledge was given on behalf of the Government that the whole system of tithes would be dealt with thereafter.

In fulfilment of this pledge, the Chief Secretary, Mr. Stanley,[2] tabled three measures in July, the first making compulsory the composition for tithe; the second constituting the bishop and clergy in each diocese a corporation for the receipt and distribution of tithes; the third providing for tithe-commutation by landowners. Vehement objection was taken by O'Connell and other Irish members to the continuance of tithe in any form; and in this they received so much support from the Radical wing of the Liberals that Stanley was fain to be content with getting his first Bill only, abandoning the other two.

When the Reformed Parliament met on 29th January the town hummed with curiosity about the appearance

[1] See *Annual Register*, 1831, pp. 325–328.

[2] Afterwards 14th Earl of Derby. "Lord Angelsey said to Duncannon at Dublin: 'Mr. Stanley and I do very well together as companions; but we differ so totally about Ireland that *I never mention the subject to him!*'" (*Creevey Papers*, ii. 265.)

and behaviour of its new masters. Outwardly, the House of Commons showed little trace of the revolution. The best-known men were nearly all back in their places. New faces, new voices, of course were there, but not more than after any general election. But the balance of parties—where was it? One hundred and forty-nine Conservatives—not to be called Tories any more, it seems[1]—were all that Peel could muster against 509 Liberals.

Meeting of the Reformed Parliament, 29th Jan. 1833.

Beneath the surface, at least in the ministerialist ranks, all was not so tranquil as appeared. The Radical contingent counted for some forty votes, and they were not slow to manifest how loose was their allegiance to a Ministry that was still essentially Whig—Whig in jealous regard for the rights of property, most of the great landowners being Whigs—Whig in intolerance of anarchy—Whig in aristocratic exclusiveness. The Radicals seized an early opportunity of showing independence. When Lord Althorp, as leader of the House, moved the old Speaker, Mr. Manners-Sutton, to the chair, they put up Mr. Littleton;[2] for was not Manners-Sutton a wicked Tory? Whereupon there came to pass what no sage could have forecast: the Conservatives trooped into the lobby in support of those very Ministers whom they had been denouncing for wrecking the Constitution.

Conservatives support the Government.

However, such fleeting alliances are often made and melted upon domestic questions; what followed was less to be expected. Stanley's well-meant remedies for the tithe grievance had drawn upon him the concentrated wrath of Repealers and Radicals, for it was calculated to strengthen the Protestant Church of Ireland; whereas O'Connell and his party would be content with nothing short of its destruction. Stanley, by far the strongest commoner and most effective speaker in the Cabinet, bore the brunt of an attack on the Government in the debate on what O'Connell termed "the brutal and bloody Speech" which Ministers

[1] It was about this time that the two great political parties became officially known as Liberals and Conservatives, Croker having coined the latter term in a *Quarterly Review* article in 1831.

[2] Created Lord Hatherton in 1835.

had drafted for the King. Stanley—Stanley—Stanley was the burden of invective during six stormy sittings; nor was there one of his colleagues able, or willing, to make effective defence. It was Peel who stood up to repel the charges against the Chief Secretary. "I am afraid," said he, "of saying what I think of his conduct; for however impartial my testimony as a public man may be, I am afraid that it might only increase the efforts which are made to ruin his reputation. . . . I only withhold the eulogy . . . lest it should increase the number of his enemies." A second time, therefore, Peel led the Conservatives into the Government lobby.

And yet a third time. The first business after the Address had been disposed of was an attempt to temper coercion of the Irish with conciliation, or, as Bulwer Lytton pithily put it, "a quick alternation of kicks and kindness." Coercion was imperatively necessary if the authority of King and Parliament was to be restored in Ireland. Conciliation was expedient in the opinion of all, just in that of most, and the manner thereof was explained by Lord Althorp on 12th February. The Irish Church numbered in its fold about 800,000 persons, not more than 10 per cent. of the population. To feed this somewhat exiguous flock, two-and-twenty bishops and fourteen hundred incumbents were maintained at a cost of upwards of £800,000 a year; of which sum three-fourths were derived from landed property. By Althorp's Bill the number of bishops was cut down to a round dozen, thus saving £60,000 a year, and another £60,000 a year was to be raised by a tax on all benefices of a greater annual value than £200. The proceeds of this tax would suffice for the maintenance and repair of ecclesiastical fabrics, hitherto paid for by a rate levied on the people.

Irish Church Bill introduced, 12th Feb. 1833.

Effusive compliments from O'Connell to the Minister who had devised at last substantial redress for burning wrong. Church rates, a grievance hardly less galling than that of tithes, were to disappear. The halcyon days were at hand indeed. So much for the "kindness."

Wait a little! This was on the 12th February. The "kicks" came on the 15th, when the Prime Minister

produced his Coercion Bill in the House of Lords. There had been nothing like it since Castlereagh's Six Acts; nay, they had been mild measures compared to this; for now martial law was to be established in any district which the Lord-Lieutenant should proclaim as "disturbed," and all persons out of their houses between sunset and sunrise were to be arrested. Juries having refused to convict on the plainest evidence, malefactors were to be dealt with by courts-martial. Was this the kind of work for Liberals after thirty years of Tory rule? The Tories had never trampled so fiercely as this on liberty.

Irish Coercion Bill introduced, 15th Feb. 1833.

When the Bill came to the Commons it was given precedence over the measure of conciliation. Althorp nearly ensured its rejection by a speech which Lord John Russell described as "tame and ineffective." It required the genius of Stanley, the Rupert of Debate, to rouse the House to a sense of the frightful condition of Ireland and to understand that the true cause of liberty was the protection of peaceable citizens against ferocious terrorism. How powerless was the ordinary law to effect that, was shown by the number and nature of outrages perpetrated with impunity upon those who dared to submit to it; how helpless were the executive, by the fact that out of £104,000 arrears which the Government were empowered to collect under the Tithe Law of the previous year, only £12,100 had been recovered.

In its immediate effect, Stanley's speech was one of the most remarkable ever delivered in the House of Commons. He had risen in an atmosphere of distrust and repugnance, so powerfully had O'Connell's impassioned eloquence stirred misgiving among the Liberal majority; "he sat down," wrote Lord John Russell in after years, "having achieved one of the greatest triumphs ever won in a popular assembly by the powers of oratory."[1] The Bill, supported by the bulk of Liberals and Conservatives, passed through all its stages by huge majorities; but the Radicals voted with O'Connell, raising the minority to the considerable figure of eighty-nine. The cleavage

[1] *Recollections and Suggestions*, by Earl Russell, p. 112.

thus revealed was no temporary one. It had its counterpart in the Cabinet, where Brougham and Durham were equally opposed to Stanley's Church policy and measures of repression.[1]

Stanley's splendid ability, displayed in piloting these Irish measures through the Commons, brought upon him a full measure of that unpopularity in Ireland which invariably awaits one who administers impartially between the disproportionate parties in that country. Moreover, some of his colleagues had given him but lukewarm support in his difficult task; had Stanley's nature been of commoner mould, one more reputation might have found sepulchre in the Irish Office. But Grey knew his man. Durham, peevish and in bad health, resigned in March, receiving the consolation of an earldom; in the rearrangement of offices, Stanley became Secretary of State for the Colonies. As things fell out, no fairer field could have been given him whereon to vindicate his devotion to the cause of freedom, and nobly he rose to the opportunity.

The movement for abolishing slavery, 1823–33.

That opportunity came in the culmination of a long train of events. Readers will not have forgotten how Wilberforce and his fellow-workers succeeded, after twenty years of strenuous agitation, in convincing Parliament and the public of the abominations of the slave-trade, nor how Fox's last public utterance was in moving a resolution for its abolition. The Acts of 1807 and 1811 prohibited the carrying of slaves in British vessels and the landing of slaves in British colonies. Since that time successive Governments had never relaxed diplomatic pressure to bring other States into line on the matter; and, practically, before the long Tory administration came to an end in 1830, no slave-ship dared hoist the flag of

[1] For the origin of the quarrel between Durham and Stanley, see *The Creevey Papers*, ii. 264. The Radical party has achieved many triumphs in the cause of humanity, but how little careful are its members to distinguish between the substance and the shadow of liberty is well exemplified in two sentences from Sir Spencer Walpole's narrative of events in 1833. In his *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 142, he admits that in Ireland "The reign of terror had effectually superseded the reign of law"; yet on page 154 he describes Lord Grey's Peace Preservation Bill as "a measure fatal to freedom in Ireland," and blames the House of Lords for their "apathy" in allowing it to pass "without venturing on a serious remonstrance."

any European nationality. So much had been accomplished before the Liberals came to power; but although the external supply had been cut off, slavery itself remained an institution in British colonies, His Majesty's Government itself being a slave-owner. In the British West Indies there were 700,000 negro slaves in 1830, the absolute property of the planters, who bred them as a farmer breeds his stock, the offspring being legally slaves from their birth. Wilberforce, Brougham, and other reformers had hoped and believed that the prohibition of importation would induce slave-owners to relax, in their own interest, the severity with which they treated their human cattle, and that it would be possible to introduce religious instruction, marriage, and other alleviations of the conditions of forced labour. The result was in the opposite direction. The supply of slaves being stinted led to the utmost being exacted from those on the spot; overwork and brutal punishment reacted on the natural fecundity of the black race, so that, instead of increasing in numbers, there were actually 100,000 fewer negroes in the West Indies in 1830 than there had been in 1807. It became clear, as the years went on, that nothing short of total abolition could prevail against the monstrous abominations of slavery.

Wilberforce bent himself to his new task, confident that if Englishmen at home could but be brought to realise the horrors enacted under the British flag, they would insist upon putting a stop to them at any sacrifice. But the West Indies were a long way off, communication with them slow, and Wilberforce was declining in years.[1] In 1821 he committed the conduct of a movement for the total abolition of slavery to Thomas Fowell Buxton, who, ably assisted by Zachary Macaulay, spent two years in collecting facts as to the condition and treatment of slaves in the plantations. Macaulay had begun life as manager of an estate in Jamaica, but had thrown up the appointment in disgust at the cruelty which he witnessed.

[1] Born in 1759, he entered Parliament in 1784, and, until he quitted it in 1825, never relaxed his efforts in the cause of philanthropy. He died in 1833.

Two years' labour enabled Buxton in 1823 to lay before Canning a chronicle of inhumanity which it is impossible to peruse at the present day without sickening disgust. It would be incredible that English men and women of the educated class should perpetrate the horrors described, were it not as certain as any fact in psychology that there is no depth of abomination to which human nature may not descend as the consequence of absolute power exercised through long periods.[1]

Buxton moved the House of Commons to condemn slavery, proposing its gradual abolition by declaring the children of slaves to be free-born. Canning could not afford to accept the resolution. West Indian influence was strong in Parliament; moreover, the law recognised private property in slaves and permitted their sale and purchase; many members who had no property of that particular kind were not willing to infringe the rights of others therein. Canning protested that the worst cruelties described by Buxton existed no longer; they belonged to a day that was dead. Nevertheless, he agreed that the flogging of female slaves should be stopped, and the use of the whip "as a stimulus to labour" should be prohibited. Accordingly Lord Bathurst, Colonial Secretary, wrote a circular to the West Indian legislatures and to the Governors of Crown Colonies, urging them to initiate measures in accordance with the unanimous resolution of the Imperial Parliament:—

"I should have communicated to you his Majesty's commands that the punishment of flogging should for the future cease with respect to female slaves, had I not been desirous that the prohibition should proceed from the Court of Policy, as I am unwilling to deprive them of the satisfaction which I am sure they will feel in originating and supporting a measure which has been approved of by all classes."

Far from taking this forcible hint, the legislature of Jamaica, where there were 350,000 slaves, vehemently

[1] There is plenty of evidence in support of the statements of Buxton and Macaulay. The appalling nature of that evidence may be seen by consulting the pages of *Hansard*, New Series, ix. 354, 331, x. 1117, 1120, 1127, *et passim*.

refused to make any change in the law, declaring that they would "resist every encroachment of despotic power," and declining "to be offered a propitiatory sacrifice at the altar of fanaticism." Barbadoes followed suit, and in Demerara, a Crown Colony and therefore under direct control of Parliament, the Court of Policy decreed that the local newspapers should make no allusion to the message of mercy.

Rumour got afloat, however, among the negroes that King George and his Parliament had decided to set them free and that the planters were withholding the good news. Result—an armed rising, suppressed in a couple of days' massacre by the troops, and followed by a long series of hangings and floggings. John Smith, an English missionary, had worked for years among the slaves, comforting them in their misery and obtaining great influence among them. After the revolt had been suppressed Smith and his wife were arrested on a charge of inciting the negroes to rebellion, and were closely confined for two months. Smith was then brought before a court-martial, tried, and condemned to death; but the frightful suffering entailed by imprisonment in a tropical climate had anticipated the hangman. John Smith died in prison. That should have satisfied his persecutors, but there was no harbour for the Angel of Mercy among West Indian planters; the last vestige of humane feeling seems to have withered in their breasts, for the Court would not allow the widow to follow her husband's body to a convict's grave.

John Smith did not die in vain. Such flagrant abuse of justice upon a white missionary brought the condition of the plantations into stronger relief than could whole hecatombs of black slaves. The Colonial Office renewed its pressure upon the legislatures; the legislatures remained obdurate. Circumstances combined to interfere with more vigorous measures being applied. When Canning died in 1827, Huskisson succeeded Bathurst at the Colonial Office, but resigned in 1828. Domestic affairs—Roman Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform—engrossed the time and attention of Parliament during the next four years; but in 1833 Fowell Buxton managed to force the Govern-

ment to fix a day when they should table their proposals for dealing with the slave question. They named one five weeks ahead, and before that day dawned (23rd April) the seals of the Colonial Office had passed from the keeping of "Goody" Goderich—a worn-out place-man—into the masculine grasp of Edward Stanley.

Then were nine years' palaver brought to an abrupt close. Stanley was thorough in reform, but he was also just. Every disinterested intellect had condemned slave-owning; but slaves were lawful property, and confiscation was not to be thought of. A sound negro brought an average price of £38 in open market. All negroes could not be sound; Parliament should buy them up at £37, 10s. a head—twenty millions sterling for the lot. Every existing slave, male and female, should serve an intermediate apprenticeship of seven years, and then go forth free.[1] Such were the main features of the memorable measure which received the Royal Assent in August 1833. The plantation negroes had always been nominally British subjects; but never till now could men honestly join in the stave—

"Britons never, never, never shall be slaves."

Stanley was destined for the highest place to which a subject may aspire; but no act in his brilliant course reflects such lustre as the emancipation of the slaves. All good men had been sighing for it, many had been working for it, during two generations, but it required the puissance of a Stanley to bear down the resistance of vested interest.

The intermediate stage of apprenticeship had been provided to mitigate the risk inseparable from the sudden liberation of 700,000 negroes, and also to enable planters to accommodate their establishments to the change. Unhappily the only preparation made by many of the planters, especially in Jamaica, was to cut down the cost of feeding their apprentices. It had been their interest to keep slaves in strong condition and to prolong their lives, for slaves were valuable property. But the British Parliament should

[1] Stanley's original proposal was for a loan of £15,000,000 and an apprenticeship of twelve years, but in committee the loan was altered to a gift of £20,000,000 and the period of apprenticeship reduced.

be made to see its blunder in interfering. It became a bad master's only concern to exact the utmost labour at the lowest cost—to work his apprentices to death, in short; for how should he profit if they survived the appointed seven years? Then as to punishment, you tyrannically forbid us to flog our own black men and women; thank goodness, you have left us our prisons, our house of correction, our stocks; our magistrates are practical men, and know how negroes must be ruled. The infernal work went on much as before, under magisterial sentence. Men and women were officially flogged on the treadmills, sometimes to death. A coroner's jury, holding inquest on the body of a woman who died under the lash on a treadmill, returned a verdict of "death by the visitation of God"![1]

The question of negro apprentices, 1838.

Let us anticipate a few years and be done, once and for all, with this gruesome subject. People in England, contented by the assurance that Stanley's Act had put an end to slavery, gradually came to the knowledge that the lot of apprentices was worse than that of slaves. Indignation meetings were held; the narratives of eyewitnesses—of negroes who had suffered almost unspeakable torments—were circulated broadcast; thousands of petitions poured into Parliament, demanding the instant cessation of the apprentice system. On 22nd May 1838 Sir Eardley Wilmot carried a motion against the Government to that effect. This happened in a thin House—only ninety-six votes to ninety-three—but Ministers were in a dilemma: they could not extenuate atrocities, the alleged nature of which had been fully confirmed by their commissioner sent to the West Indies in the previous year; they would not break their compact with the planters, fixing 1st August 1840 for the release of the apprentices. They took a middle course. Whipping up their supporters, they induced the House to rescind Wilmot's resolution, and they brought in a Bill to better the lot of apprentices, making black people liable to no other punishments than white people, and prohibiting magistrates from ordering negro women to be put on the treadmill, to be flogged or shaved.

[1] *Hansard*, New Series, xliii. 113.

The legislature of Jamaica, deaf to all remonstrance on the score of humanity, angrily threw up the contention. What use have we for apprentices whom we may not flog with whips and tame by starvation and foul prisons? Let them all go! Two years before the appointed date, all the apprentices were set free.

Wilberforce was dead; Zachary Macaulay lay a-dying; Fowell Buxton had lost his seat; even the brilliant champion of their cause was no longer in the Ministry—had crossed the floor, indeed, sitting beside Peel in opposition; but here at last was the crown and consummation of their long labours. Henceforward every soul under the British flag was free.

The suppression of the slave-trade and the abolition of slavery were substantial symptoms of the awakening of the national sense to humane impulse. Upon no feature of the nineteenth century may generous minds dwell with more complete approval, especially as it was not confined in its effects to black men, nor even to white men, but has resulted in many laws being passed to protect beasts and birds from unnecessary suffering. Not until the Rev. James Granger roused the ire of his parishioners by preaching the duty of clemency to the lower animals[1] had men begun to recognise a flaw in Aristotle's doctrine that "friendship and justice are out of the question towards any lifeless thing, and the same rule applies to a man's ox or ass."[2] Granger's act was denounced as a scandalous prostitution of the pulpit, to be excused only as the result of mental aberration. Exactly a hundred years went by before the seed sown by this worthy parson bore fruit in the shape of "Humanity" Martin's[3] Act of 1822, the first law ever enacted in any country for the interest of the brute creation. Martin was chief agent in the formation of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and although when he died, in 1834, the so-called sports of

The humanitarian impulse, 1725–1838.

[1] The sermon was published in 1725, entitled *An Apology for the Brute Creation, or Abuse of Animals censured.*

[2] The Church of Rome has in recent years affirmed this doctrine, by declaring officially that beasts have no rights.

[3] Richard Martin (1754–1834), member of the Irish Parliament 1776–1800, and, after the Union, member for Galway 1801–26.

bull and bear baiting were still as lawful as when Gay wrote in *Trivia*—

> "Experienced men, inured to city ways,
> Need not the calendar to count their days.
> When through the town, with slow and solemn air,
> Led by the nostril walks the muzzled bear;
> Behind him moves, majestically dull,
> The pride of Hockley Hole, the surly bull,
> Learn hence the periods of the week to name—
> Mondays and Thursdays are the days of game"—

yet these were doomed by the Act of 1835.

Acts such as these, however, were, so to speak, but by-products of the general trend of opinion. As Mr. Leslie Stephen once sensibly said, "We must not cry over a dead donkey while the children are in want of bread"; and it was to the aid of British children that the Reformed Parliament was summoned in its second session; and, the mote having been removed from the West Indian planter's eye, the nation was called sternly to account for the beam in its own.

The industrial supremacy of Great Britain was, in truth, the cloak of some very loathsome sores. In the textile trades, especially, the revolution brought about by Cartwright's invention of the power-loom had been swift and sweeping. The craft which, from immemorial time, had been plied in thousands of humble homes in all parts of the country, was now concentrated in huge factories on the banks of rivers. The hand-loom weaver might be considered lucky who found employment there, for the new automatic machinery worked more swiftly than the deftest hands. Moreover, adult labour is expensive; let picking and shedding tappets take the place of human fingers; and for the light work—piecing broken threads, removing obstructions, cleaning the machines, and so on—do not our workhouses swarm with idle children? Let them be set to do it. Hence the apprenticeship system, whereby tens of thousands of children were swept up and set to work at five, six, and seven years old, normally for twelve, frequently for fourteen

The miseries of child labour in factories.

hours a day, during which it was against rule to sit down except in the hour and a half allowed for meal-times.[1]

Ah, Christ! could such things be in Merry England? Imagination sickens in attempting to realise the lot of these innocents. Herded in squalid dens at night, and crowded in hot, dusty factories by day, they fell easy victims to malignant fever and infectious disease, the survivors growing up with stunted bodies and malformed limbs.[2] Even humane and thoughtful mill-owners professed themselves unable to contend against the vicious system which had been allowed to establish itself throughout the whole textile industry. Sir Robert Peel, founder of calico-printing in Lancashire and father of the future Prime Minister, spoke frankly in his evidence before the Committee of 1816 of the state of matters in his own factory at the close of the eighteenth century:—

"The house in which I have a concern gave employment at one time to near a thousand children of this description [parish apprentices]. Having other pursuits, it was not often in my power to visit the factories, but whenever such visits were made, I was struck with the uniform appearance of bad health and, in many cases, of stunted growth of the children. The hours of labour were regulated by the interest of the overseer, whose remuneration depending on the quantity of work done, he was often induced to make the poor children work excessive hours, and to stop their complaints by trifling bribes."[3]

To remedy evils which he felt himself powerless (amid his "other pursuits") to redress in his own mills, Sir Robert in 1802 introduced and passed the measure known as the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act (42 Geo. iii. c. 73). It was a beginning—let Sir Robert have full credit for being the

Beginning of factory legislation, 1802.

[1] This is no exaggeration. The hard facts are plainly set forth in the reports of the Select Committees on Factories in 1816 and 1832. In 1833 Mr. Duncombe quoted in the House of Commons from a Macclesfield paper of 1825 an advertisement of 4000 or 5000 persons between 7 and 20 years of age.

[2] The atmosphere was so thickly charged with cotton fluff that children and adults kept continually spitting to get rid of it. Modern science has determined that there is no means by which tubercular disease can be disseminated so surely as by expectoration.

[3] *Report of Select Committee*, 1816, p. 133.

first to induce the Legislature to recognise the evil. If the first step was a feeble one, it was in the right direction. Factories were to be periodically whitewashed; night work for apprenticed children was prohibited, their day labour was limited to twelve hours, and provision was made for teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as for religious instruction! Difficult, one should say, to wedge these in after the twelve hours' work; but the feeblest part of the measure was the provision for inspection. Quarter sessions were to appoint two visitors—a justice of the peace and a clergyman—unpaid amateurs; slender guarantee this for the enforcement of the modest restrictions imposed upon employers.

Mild as was this measure, probably it gave Sir Robert Peel the power he wanted to check the harshness of his own overseers; nor was he suffered to rest on his oars. He was not the only philanthropist among mill-owners. He had quieted his own conscience; but such men as Robert Owen and Samuel Kydd would not be still until white slavery had been suppressed in all King George's realm. Owen gave Peel no peace until, in 1816, he obtained the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the conditions of factory labour, upon whose report a Bill was brought in and passed the House of Commons in 1818.[1] But the House of Lords would not sanction legislation of this novel kind without satisfying themselves of its necessity. They appointed a committee of their own number; the heart-rending story was heard once more; and the Factory Act became law in 1819.[2] Its main and most valuable feature

Robert Owen and the Factory Act of 1819.

[1] Opposition to the Bill was strengthened by dislike of Owen, who had initiated a crusade against any form of religion. On 27th April 1808, Lord Lascelles and Lord Lauderdale both opposed the Bill on the ground that Owen was the real author thereof. The history of Factory Reform is well told in Mr. Podmore's *Biography of Robert Owen* (London, 1906).

[2] The evidence before the Committee amply bore out the following statements in a letter addressed to Mr. Peel (afterwards Sir Robert) in 1818, thanking him for having spoken in support of his father's Bill:—

"The principal cotton mills here work from half-past five in the morning till half-past eight at night, so that the poor children are called out of bed at five, and it is nine at night when they get home, some of them being under six, many under eight years of age. We feel exquisitely for them in

was that it applied to all "young persons" employed in cotton factories, whether apprenticed or free. No child younger than nine years might be employed at all, and until children ceased, according to the Act, at sixteen years old to be "young persons," their labour was limited to twelve hours daily, *exclusive of meal hours*, night labour being entirely prohibited. The good in the Bill was largely neutralised by its limitation to cotton factories only, and by the absence of all provision for official inspection. Even the unpaid, and therefore voluntary, inspection prescribed by the Act of 1802 was left out, and nothing provided in its place.

Notwithstanding these defects, this feeble and tentative measure marked a notable departure from precedent—from principle also, as its opponents contended. The State for the first time assumed duties in respect of the children of free parents which it had undertaken towards pauper apprentices by the Act of 1802.

By the time the new Act came into force, the cause of the children had lost the powerful advocacy of Robert Owen, who was busy dissipating his fortune in socialist schemes and spiritualist dreams; but the children found a fresh champion in the person of Tom Sadler, Tory member for Newark. He sat in Parliament for four years only—1829–32—but accomplished more in that brief career than most men achieve in forty years. At a time when the gales of Reform were at their loudest, he managed to gain the ear of the House, made out an irresistible case for renewing inquiry into the condition of factories, and in 1831 carried the second reading of his Bill to regulate child labour therein. It was referred to a Select Committee, who were soon convinced how little the former Acts had done to mitigate the horrors, even in cotton factories, to which their operation had been confined. In wool, worsted, flax, and hemp mills the cruel exactions of the overseers

Michael Thomas Sadler, 1780–1835.

the winter time, coming out of the warm bed, clothed in rags or half naked, through the cold, frost, snow, winds and rain, many of them barefoot, into the hot room, where no air is permitted to enter that can be prevented, as it is injurious in the spinning of cotton." (*Sir Robert Peel from his Private Papers*, edited by C. S. Parker, i. 259.)

were subject to no check whatever; the mortality was frightful, and artisans came before the committee to give oral evidence of their sufferings as children, and ocular demonstration thereof in their warped and wasted limbs.[1] Never was a clearer case established for interference.

Howbeit, the unreformed Parliament was on its death-bed, and Sadler had no seat in its successor, having been defeated by Macaulay in the contest for Leeds. *Uno avulso non deficit alter.* The torch fallen from the hand of Sadler was snatched by another Tory — Antony Lord Ashley, then a youthful and ardent politician, to be blessed by all coming generations of British workmen as Earl of Shaftesbury, indefatigable advocate of the feeble and oppressed—

Antony Lord Ashley, afterwards 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, 1801–85.

> Justissimus unus
> Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui.

Ashley introduced a Factories Bill during the first session of the Reformed Parliament, thereby putting Ministers in a nice dilemma, thus naïvely explained in the colourless columns of the *Annual Register* for 1833:—

> "The Bill . . . was opposed by the great body of the manufacturing capitalists, so many of whom had been sent into the House by the Reform Act, and who possessed very powerful influence out of it. The Ministers were compelled to adopt an apparently indifferent course, not desirous to offend the large constituencies, and still less inclined to thwart the mass of manufacturers."[2]

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[1] *Report of the Select Committee*, Parl. Paper 706, 1831–32.

[2] If history is to be readable, some partisan flavour is inevitable. It is not in human nature to discourse upon British politics with thorough impartiality, instinct as they are with party spirit. When Charles II. died and James II. was proclaimed, Burnet says: "There were no tears for the last king, and no shouts for the present one." Echard, on the other hand, describes universal emotion—"all people began now to wipe their eyes and to dry up those tears they had so plentifully shed." Seeing, then, how the truth differs in aspect according to point of view, it is peculiarly unfortunate for the Tory and Conservative party that English historians of the nineteenth century have been hitherto, without a single exception, Whigs or Radicals who, however unconsciously, have claimed far more in the matter of social legislation than is due for their own party. A perusal of the speeches delivered by Radical members in debate upon the Bill of 1833 and upon subsequent measures of a like nature may serve to put in clearer light the respective

To gain time, therefore, a Lancashire member, Mr. Wilson Patten, was put up to move for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the necessity for any change in the factory laws. A constitutional and dignified mode of procrastination; but the House of Commons had little relish for it, factory labour having begun to be sharply discussed in the constituencies. Ayes, 74; Noes, 73; so "the Ayes have it"—by a single vote! A narrow escape for the Government; but no matter, my lords and gentlemen, the question is safely shelved for another session.

Royal Commission on Factories, 1833.

So much for tactics! but whereas Royal Commissions are almost proverbially slow in procedure, it was surely bad luck that this one should display alacrity beyond all precedent in discharging their task. Instead of listening for three or four hours on a couple of days a week to witnesses carefully chosen and brought up to London, these Commissioners showed an indelicate preference to be their own witnesses. Dividing into parties of two or three, they visited personally the manufacturing districts of the north, and their report, which was delivered only two months or so after their appointment, dispelled the last doubts about the existence of systematic and monstrous oppression, and thoroughly aroused public indignation.

But before that report was published, Ashley's Bill reappeared in July among the orders of the day, and had to be dealt with. The Whig Cabinet could not bring themselves to throw over the manufacturers, among whom lay their strength as against the country Tories. Lord Althorp, as leader of the House, moved to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, and the Government sustained defeat by a majority of twenty-three. Eventually the measure became law, its principal and best provisions being the limitation

attitude of the two great parties in regard to humane legislation. Thus in the discussion upon Lord Ashley's Bill, Mr. Fryer (Wolverhampton) "was satisfied that the Factories Bill would prove nothing but a delusion" (*Hansard*, Third Series, xvi. 879); Mr. Phillips (Manchester) declared that in a year or so "the trade would be wholly gone from this country, and would be in the hands of foreigners" (ibid., p. 1001); while Mr. Potter (Wigan) lived to see falsified his prophecy that "a blow would be inflicted upon the cotton-trade from which it would never recover" (ibid., p. 1002).

of the labour of children under thirteen to eight hours a day, and of "young persons" between thirteen and eighteen to twelve hours a day.

Labour legislation has travelled far since these early days. Sir Robert Peel the younger was at the head of affairs in 1844, and was beaten twice in divisions upon his Home Secretary's Factory Bill, Lord Ashley having moved an amendment limiting the hours of adult labour to ten a day.[1] The Whips were set to work, and the defeat was retrieved at a subsequent stage of the Bill, which, becoming law, reduced the maximum of child labour to six and a half hours a day, and that of female labour to twelve hours.[2]

The Factory Act of 1844.

Next came Mr. Fielden's Ten Hours Bill in 1846, which, though thrown out by a small majority, was successfully carried in the following session in the teeth of vehement opposition by Richard Cobden and John Bright. The last-named member described it as "one of the worst measures ever passed," and vowed that it would create "so formidable a combination of the owners of capital that the House could not successfully legislate against it."[3]

Fielden's Ten Hours Act, 1847.

Further restrictions upon employers were imposed in 1850, and the report of Lord Ashley's Commission in 1861 was followed by the Act of 1864, which brought the pottery,

[1] Sir Robert Peel explained in a letter to the Queen his reasons for making the question of restricting the hours of adult labour one of confidence in his Ministry. "It was opposed by your Majesty's servants on the ground that it exposed the manufacturers of this country to a very formidable competition with those of other countries in which labour is not restricted; that it must lead at a very early period to a great reduction in the wages of the workmen, as it is vain to suppose that their masters will give the same wages for ten hours' labour as they give for twelve . . . and that it would incur great risk of serious injury to our commerce, and therefore to our means of employing manufacturing industry, were we to enact that the number of hours in the year devoted to labour should be diminished by five hundred." (Parker's *Peel*, iii. 147.)

[2] As in 1833, so in 1844, the most vehement opponents of this humane legislation were members of the Whig and Radical party. Lord Brougham adopted *argumentum ad ridendum*, asking why washerwomen and wet-nurses were not to receive the protection of the Bill; and Mr. John Bright, newly elected for Durham, denounced it as "miserable legislation, on principles false and mischievous."

[3] *Hansard*, xci. 125.

match-making, and cartridge-making trades under regulation; but it was not until the Conservative Government of Lord Derby in 1867 passed the Factory Act Extension Act and the Workshops Regulation Act that provision was made for enforcing the law by means of regularly paid inspectors. By the first of these Acts, all works employing more than fifty operatives were brought under regulation, and this affected the conditions under which a million and a half of women and children had been working.

Factories Act Consolidation Act, 1878.

It was reserved for Mr. Richard Cross, a Lancashire member and able Home Secretary in Mr. Disraeli's administration,[1] to unite all the provisions of former statutes in the Factories Act Consolidation Act of 1878. Mr. Cross was not only well qualified by birth and residence in a teeming industrial district to handle this complicated subject, but he also worked in the light thrown by modern science upon the essentials of sanitation. It should never be forgotten, in passing judgment upon the acts of our forefathers, how recent that light is. A full third of the century had run before the investigations of Ehrenberg and Dujardin had established the nature of the minute organisms known as bacteria; and the century was drawing towards a close before their physiological significance as agents of disease was recognised.[2] The elder Peel, in his well-meant efforts in 1802 to improve the sanitary conditions of factory labour, was working as one who should be set to sweep out a room blindfold.

Factory and Workshops Act, 1891.

With the statutes regulating factory labour thus consolidated in the Act of 1878, it was comparatively easy to extend the provisions thereof to other conditions of labour, which Lord Dunraven's Committee on the Sweating System in 1890 ascertained to be frequently oppressive and insanitary. Hence the Factory and Workshops Act of 1891, which brought all workshops under regulation, without regard to scale, numbers employed, or nature of the industry. By this Act also the minimum age of child labour was raised from eight to eleven years;

[1] Created Viscount Cross in 1886.

[2] It was not till 1882 that Professor Koch isolated the bacillus of tubercle (consumption), and in 1883 that of cholera.

the employment of women was prohibited during four weeks after childbirth; and lists of outworkers were required in order to check the abuses of home-labour known as "sweating."

Concurrently with these and many other minor measures regulating labour, the efforts of Parliament were directed to remedy the evils of overcrowding and want of sanitation in the dwellings of the working classes. In this matter, again, action was due to Lord Shaftesbury's initiative, who in 1852 succeeded in passing the Common Lodging Houses Act, to be followed in 1868 by the important Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, whereof the Liberal author, Mr. M'Cullagh-Torrens, obtained the ready support and sanction of the Conservative Government then in power. It required that in every town of 25,000 inhabitants or upwards, an officer of health should be appointed, upon whose report any dwelling might be condemned as insanitary and the landlord be compelled to improve or remove it. The powers of local authorities under this Act were greatly enlarged by the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, and its application was extended to all rural as well as urban districts. Slums there are still in our great cities, squalor and filth in some villages beloved of landscape artists; but the improvement has been general and immense; medical officers of health have been assiduous, local authorities unflinching, heedless or avaricious landlords brought to their bearings.[1]

Dwelling-house legislation, 1851-90.

[1] It is to the point that the present writer may cite as an example what has taken place on his own agricultural estate of 17,000 acres. The officer of health having called the attention of landowners to the danger of contamination in open wells, there have been sunk and built on the said estate, since the passing of the Act of 1890, ninety-five wells, at an average cost of £25, or £2355 in all.

CHAPTER II

Unpopularity of Ministers — Agitation against assessed taxes — Ministers defeated over the Malt Tax—Sir J. C. Hobhouse defeated in Westminster — Riot in Coldbath Fields — Lord Durham resigns — Cabinet crisis—King William's address to the Irish Bishops—Littleton's Irish Tithes Bill—Brougham and Littleton intrigue with O'Connell—Resignation of Lord Grey, Lord Althorp, and Mr. Littleton—Lord Melbourne forms a Ministry—Distress of the country labourers—Law Reform—Ministers defeated on the Tithes Bill—The King dismisses his Ministers — Wellington entrusted with the Seals — Sir Robert Peel's First Administration.

THE Constitution of 1832 was a long step towards democratic government. The middle class had been admitted to a large measure of power, and the abolition of rotten boroughs had rendered parliamentary representation a reality. Lord Grey's Ministry, indeed, remained essentially aristocratic. His Cabinet of fourteen contained ten peers[1] and two sons of peers[2] (and never was there a haughtier oligarchy than the Whig magnates), but the record of their first two sessions testified to their earnestness in reform and their honest resolution to redeem their pledges. They had applied twenty millions to buying up and liberating the West Indian slaves, a necessary, though long deferred, complement to the suppression of the slave-trade; they had dealt trenchantly with the Irish Church, suppressing ten out of twenty-two bishoprics, and relieving seven-eighths of the Irish people from the detested obligation of contributing to the upkeep of edifices which their religion forbade them to enter; and they had yielded, though with reluctance, to the demand for humane regulation of factory labour. Had they not amply justified the confidence of those who returned them to power?

One would think so: yet they were to have experience

[1] Viscount Palmerston was an Irish peer with a seat in the House of Commons.

[2] Lord John Russell and Lord Stanley.

thus early of what is an invariable factor in democratic constitutions—namely, electoral ingratitude. "Put not your trust in princes" is a precept men learnt by heart in very early times, but British statesmen seem incapable of realising that, although the popular memory is remarkably tenacious of offence, benefits conferred make no impression whatever.[1] Lord Grey's Ministry had won the people's battle in 1832, and were acclaimed as the saviours of society; but by the end of 1833 they had learnt how few reforms can be achieved without exasperating as many individuals as they appease.

Unpopularity of Ministers, 1833.

Manufacturers resented the Factory Act as an unwarrantable interference with private contract; Whig churchmen disliked the Irish Church Temporalities Act almost as much as the Tories did, discerning in the suppression of ten out of twenty-two bishoprics a substantial instalment of disestablishment. True, it relieved the Roman Catholic peasantry of an obligation which no Whig, Radical or Liberal, could defend, but before the Irish peasantry could enjoy that relief they had been made to feel the sting of a drastic Coercion Act, which preceded the conciliatory measure, placing all disturbed districts in Ireland under martial law (with certain restrictions). To resist this, Radicals made common cause with Repealers against the Government, and were henceforward to be reckoned as more dangerously hostile than the Tory opposition.

Dissension and discontent among ministerialists within Parliament had their counterpart out of doors in a vehement agitation against the assessed taxes. Exaggerated hopes of relief from taxation had been encouraged during the battle for Reform, and, in his budget for 1833, Althorp had been able to effect reduction to the extent of £1,056,000,[2] including £224,000 represent-

Agitation against taxation, 1833–34.

[1] The fate of Lord Salisbury's second administration, 1886–92, affords one out of many instances that might be cited. Local government in the three kingdoms was put upon a broadly representative basis by the Acts of 1888, 1889, and 1892; three millions had been applied to the relief of local rates, and elementary education was made free in 1891. Nevertheless, at the general election of 1892 the Unionist majority of 66 was converted into a minority of forty.

[2] The enormous expansion of revenue and expenditure during the last seventy years causes the remission of a million sterling in taxation to appear

ing the house and window tax on shops and warehouses. This tax had been a long-standing grievance, especially in towns whence the Whig Government drew its chief strength, for the cottages of agricultural labourers were exempt from it, and it told severely upon the urban middle and working classes. Petitions poured into Parliament for its total repeal on all dwelling-houses, and members received a regular fusillade of letters from angry constituents. Then that venerable bogey of the country party—the Malt Tax—roused another set of malcontents. Sir William Ingilby, representing East Anglian barley-growers, moved to reduce it from 20s. 8d. a quarter to 10s. Supported by Radicals, always ready to vote against any tax, and by Irish Repealers, legitimately interested in their national porter and whisky, Ingilby carried his amendment by 162 votes to 152. Lord Grey nearly made up his mind to resign,[1] for there loomed on the notice paper a still more formidable amendment in the name of one of the Whig members for the City, proposing the repeal of all assessed taxes. Howbeit, many and great are the resources of a Minister strong in the House of Commons. Althorp announced that if Sir John Key's amendment were carried he would have recourse to a property tax, and the threat brought his party to heel. Members did not carry altruism so far as to be willing to take on their own shoulders the burden from which they were anxious that their poorer constituents should be relieved. Key was handsomely defeated, and Althorp, adroitly employing the forms of the House to involve the rescission of Ingilby's motion in the rejection of Key's, carried his budget at such cost in popularity as was soon to be shown.

Ministers defeated on the Malt Tax, 1833.

Sir John Cain Hobhouse, who had succeeded Stanley in

almost trifling. But proportionately it was considerable, as may be seen by comparing the budgets of 1833 and 1908 :—

1833–34		1908–9	
Revenue . .	£46,494,128	Revenue . .	£154,350,000
Expenditure . .	44,922,219	Expenditure .	154,109,000
Surplus . .	1,571,909	Surplus .	£241,000

[1] Greville, ii. 368

March as Secretary for Ireland, felt bound by his election pledges against voting with his colleagues for the retention of the house and window tax; and resigned not only his office, but his seat for Westminster, which he had held since 1820, thereby giving the electors a chance of showing their indignation with the Government. They seized the occasion. Making no allowance for the obligation of a Minister not to vote against his chiefs, they pelted the martyr of 1819 [1] with rotten cabbages, and elected in his place a still more advanced Radical in the person of Colonel de Lacy Evans, a veteran of the Peninsula, New Orleans, and Waterloo.

Hobhouse defeated in Westminster, May 1833.

The agitation spread to the country. In all the great towns people assembled to denounce those Ministers who, only a few months before, had been their idols. A meeting summoned to Coldbath Fields to form a National Convention was prohibited by proclamation from the Home Office. The people assembled notwithstanding; the police attempted to disperse it, when one constable was stabbed to death and another severely wounded. *Vox populi* made itself heard in the verdict of the coroner's jury. "Justifiable homicide," said they, and stuck to it when the scandalised coroner remonstrated. The verdict having been quashed by the Court of King's Bench on 29th May, a fellow was tried at the Old Bailey on 4th June for murdering the policeman. This time the jury's verdict was Not guilty.

Riot in Coldbath Fields, 17th May 1833.

No doubt Grey, with a majority of 140 in the House of Commons and with a temperate opposition in the House of Lords,[2] might easily have lived down this temporary dis-

[1] Hobhouse stood as a Radical for Westminster in 1819, and, having been defeated, published a pamphlet on Parliamentary Reform, for which he was brought to the bar of the House of Commons and sentenced to imprisonment in Newgate, whence he was released at the dissolution in 1820. He was created Lord Broughton in 1851.

[2] The Duke of Wellington, though strongly urged by the section of peers headed by Lord Londonderry to oppose every measure of the Government, was firm in refusing to do so indiscriminately, as the following extracts from many similar ones in his correspondence at the time bear testimony:—"I have never relished, as you know, the seeking opportunities to carp at and oppose the measures of the Government; the whole course of my life has been different. I dislike such conduct at present more than I did heretofore." (*To*

favour had his colleagues not fallen out among themselves. But they had so fallen out—irreconcilably—on the question of appropriating the revenue to be alienated from the Irish Church. Lord Grey had no more restive colleague than his own son-in-law, Lord Durham.[1] Sensitive and irascible, he threw up his office in dudgeon not so deep as to allow him to reject a proffered earldom. It was the consequent rearrangement of the Ministry that brought about the catastrophe of the Westminster election, and revealed a condition of things thus pithily described by a Whig historian: "In 1832 hardly a constituency would support a member of the Opposition: in 1834 hardly a constituency would return a member of the Government."[2] Sir John Campbell,[3] vacating his seat for Dudley on appointment as Attorney-General, lost it, and had to cross the Border in search of a more hospitable constituency, which he did some months later in Edinburgh.

Lord Durham resigns, March 1833.

The mine that was to make the first serious breach in the Reform Cabinet was fired by a train laid, as Lord Palmerston roundly asserted, by the vengeful hand of Durham, who desired to force the resignation of his opponents in the Cabinet that he himself might re-enter it.[4] If this be true, Durham found

Cabinet crisis, 29th May 1834.

Lord Aberdeen, 18*th January* 1833.)—"There is no man who dislikes more than I do the principles and policy of the existing administration, or is more opposed to their course of action. But I cannot shut my eyes to the state in which Parliament and the country are. . . . I wish, therefore, as far at least as I am personally concerned, to afford no ground for the charge of faction. Other noble lords may entertain a different opinion." (*To Lord Roden*, 13*th March* 1833.)—"I have been in office and served the King throughout my life, and I know all the difficulties in which the Government are placed. I cannot enter upon an opposition to government . . . with a view to impede their course by increased difficulties. I would diminish these difficulties if I could." (*To H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland*, 1*st October* 1833.)

[1] John George Lambton, M.P. for co. Durham 1813-28; created Baron Durham in 1830, when he was appointed Lord Privy Seal.

[2] Spencer Walpole's *England*, iii. 253.

[3] Lord Chancellor of Ireland and Baron Campbell 1841; Lord Chancellor of Great Britain 1859.

[4] Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 197. See also *Creevey*, ii. 277. On the other hand, Althorp and the advanced party believed that "Graham kicks up this dust with ulterior views, aiming at a junction with Peel—Stanley of course included—and coming into office with a moderate mixed party" (Greville, iii. 87); which is exactly what eventually happened.

a trenchant instrument in Henry Ward, M.P. for St. Albans, who on 27th May moved a resolution declaring the justice and necessity of depriving the Church of Ireland of part of its temporalities. After the motion had been seconded by George Grote, one of the members for the City and future historian of Greece, Althorp rose and requested that the debate might be adjourned in consequence of intelligence he had received since he entered the House. Agreed to, *nem. con.*, members being pretty well aware of what was in the wind. Cabinets, no doubt, manage to keep their proceedings, or most of them, as well shrouded as any handful of honourable men, bound to secrecy, can do; but at times the internal heat waxes so intense as to affect the outer air. Nobody was surprised, therefore, when it became known that Stanley, Graham, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Ripon had resigned rather than consent to the course which the Government had decided to take on Ward's motion.[1] It was the old and plausible manœuvre of a royal commission to inquire into the state of the Irish Church—whether it was really rotten, as its enemies declared, or only ripe, as the seceding Ministers maintained.

So out went these four, leaving their chief (not, be assured, without real compunction, for all men loved Lord Grey) in perplexity how to fill their rooms. "They will be forced," wrote Greville, "to put peers in the vacant places, because nobody can get re-elected. The rotten boroughs now seem not quite such abominations, or at all events they had some compensating advantages."[2]

King William puts down his foot, 28th May 1834.

When the House met again on 2nd June, Althorp announced that the King had appointed a Commission of laymen to inquire into the condition of the Irish Church; but a few days previously, on 28th May, his Majesty had delivered a long and remarkable speech in reply to an address pre-

[1] The first three of the Ministers named had already resigned on 7th May, but resumed office on Lord Grey declaring that he would retire from public life if they deserted him (*Creevey*, ii. 274). In Lord Ripon the reader may not recognise at once the quondam Tory M.P. who succeeded Canning as Minister in 1827 and became Lord Goderich.

[2] Greville, iii. 88. This forecast was almost literally fulfilled, the new Ministers being the Marquess of Conyngham, Postmaster-General, instead

sented by the Irish bishops, for which speech Liberal historians can find no terms of condemnation too strong.[1]

"I have been," said the King, "by the circumstances of my life and by conviction, led to support toleration to the utmost extent of which it is justly capable; but toleration must not be suffered to go into licentiousness; it has its bounds, which it is my duty, and which I am resolved, to maintain. I am, from the deepest conviction, attached to the pure Protestant faith which this church, of which I am the temporal head, is the human means of diffusing and preserving in this land. . . . That religion, and the church of England and Ireland, the prelates of which are now before me, it is my fixed purpose, determination, and resolution to maintain. . . . I trust it will not be supposed that I am speaking to you a speech which I have got by heart. No: I am declaring to you my real and genuine sentiments. I have almost completed my 69th year. . . . I cannot therefore expect that I shall be very long in this world. It is under this impression that I tell you, that while I know that the law of the land considers it impossible that I should do wrong, that while I know there is no earthly power which can call me to account, this only makes me the more deeply sensible of the responsibility under which I stand to that Almighty Being before whom we must all one day appear. When that day shall come, you will know whether I am sincere in the declaration, which I now make, of firm attachment to the church and resolution to maintain it."[2]

In the resumed debate upon Ward's motion Stanley supported Althorp's amendment, though with reluctance, as the indirect means of defeating the direct attack on the Irish Church.

"If," said he, "you leave open the question of abolishing the church establishment and begin to tamper with the church property, you must come at last to this conclusion—that all religions ought to be placed on the same footing. Now I tell the

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of the Duke of Richmond; the Earl of Carlisle, Lord Privy Seal, instead of Lord Ripon; Lord Auckland, First Lord of the Admiralty, instead of Sir James Graham; and Mr. Spring Rice, succeeding Stanley at the Colonial Office, managed to scrape in again for Cambridge by a majority of 25 votes.

[1] Spencer Walpole says the King forgot "his duties as a constitutional monarch," and, without quoting from the speech, dismisses it as "impotent and improper" (*England*, iii. 255). Impotent it certainly was not, the sentiments are lofty and the language dignified. Its candour might prove unpalatable to a full-blown democracy; but British democracy was not full-blown in 1834, and it was not expected of the Head of the State that he should be no more than a mute automaton.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1833, pp. 43, 44.

House, boldly and distinctly, that the people of England are not ripe for that. And when I say that the people of England are not ripe for that, let me call upon you to pause before you assent to a resolution which you cannot, which you ought not, which the people of England will not let you, carry into effect."

Sir Robert Peel took the same line as Stanley, strongly disapproving the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry, but voting for it as the lesser evil, although admitting that "the time might come when they ought to consider whether measures might not be devised for appropriating a portion of the church revenues of Ireland, not to other objects, but so as to facilitate the propagation of divine truth. . . . He was ready at the same time to give his decided opposition to any proposal which would go to appropriate these funds to other and to secular purposes." [1]

Littleton's Tithes Bill, 1834.

The Government having been reconstructed and the obstacle of Ward's resolution having been circumnavigated, Ministers appeared to have a clear course before them, and applied themselves to passing the Bill introduced earlier in the session by Littleton, the Irish Secretary, to remove the grievance of the Irish tithe-payers. This was the old-standing sore, with which Stanley had grappled unsuccessfully in 1832. In 1833 there were outstanding arrears of tithe in Ireland to the amount of £1,200,000, and Littleton, to save some of the poorer clergy from absolute indigence, obtained a vote of £1,000,000 to relieve them, while the Irish Government received authority from Parliament to collect the arrears in order to repay the advance. The Bill of 1834 provided for the reduction of the tithes by one-fifth, their commutation into a land tax to be collected by the State, and permission to redeem the said tax on easy terms. These proposals met with most strenuous opposition from the Irish members under Daniel O'Connell. That master of

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole's account of Peel's attitude affords an instance of the need for caution in accepting the statements of a partisan writer. He describes Stanley as having "the mortification to find that the ablest members on the Opposition benches repudiated his views, and that Peel was prepared to consider the propriety of redistributing church property" (*England*, iii. 254). A reference to the debate (*Hansard*, xxiv. 35, 59) will show that Stanley and Peel expressed sentiments almost identical, and they voted in the same lobby.

parliamentary tactics had no difficulty in exposing the hollowness of the boon offered to the Catholic peasant, who, instead of paying tithe to the owner thereof, would have to pay a tax to enable the State to subsidise a Protestant clergy. Clause by clause, O'Connell and his devoted band, recruited by a few Radicals, fought the Bill in committee with that combination of tenacity and dexterity whereof only Irish members are capable. There were 150 clauses, or thereby, in the Bill, and, in an evil moment for himself and his colleagues, Littleton, at Brougham's instigation, sought to facilitate its progress by "squaring" O'Connell. Not for the first time, nor yet for the last, was an Irish Secretary thus lured to his fall. The Coercion Bill of the previous session had been passed for a single year only; the continued disturbance in Ireland rendered it imperative to renew the Act. Suppose Littleton could persuade his colleagues to drop those sections enabling the Lord-Lieutenant to prohibit public meetings, would Mr. O'Connell not see his way to relax something in the vigour, and especially in the prolixity, of his opposition to the Tithes Bill? That the Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Wellesley, attached special importance to these powers of prohibition was a small matter. Wellesley might be counted upon to take any line whereof his brother Wellington would disapprove. Brougham would write and bid him be reasonable. Brougham did so on 19th June, with the result expected. On the 23rd Grey received a letter from the Lord-Lieutenant, expressing readiness to dispense with those powers which his provincial officials had declared "unanimously and powerfully" to be essential to the security of Ireland.[1] Grey was puzzled, wrote requesting Wellesley to reconsider the question, and required him, in effect, to confine his attention to the good government of Ireland, without regard to the difficulties of Ministers in the House

Brougham and Littleton intrigue with O'Connell, June 1834.

[1] Wellesley had written to Melbourne (Home Secretary) in April, "after the most attentive consideration of the dreadful scenes passing under my view," informing him that he had consulted his provincial inspectors, and that they had expressed themselves "unanimously and powerfully" in favour of renewing the Coercion Act in all its integrity (*Annual Register*, 1834, p. 329).

of Commons. Wellesley replied that he thought he could do without the special powers, if their repeal would promote the accomplishment of other objects.

Meanwhile Littleton, in full consultation with Brougham, had, on 24th June, obtained Althorp's guarded approval of his negotiating with O'Connell, and had strained this approval so far as to induce the Irish leader to withdraw the Repeal candidate in favour of a Whig in the election for Wexford then pending. This was done upon Littleton's assurance, given in strict confidence, that the Coercion Act would not be renewed—at least by himself.

They greatly mistook their man who imagined that Grey would blink a principle to shirk a difficulty or risk the peace of Ireland for expediency of the moment. On 29th June he laid the question before his Cabinet, and carried seven of his thirteen colleagues with him in support of the whole powers of the Bill.[1] A bare majority, secured by the vote of Brougham, author of the intrigue, who thus ignobly deserted his tool Littleton. Althorp, on the other hand, voted in the minority against the clauses.

Littleton had now to inform O'Connell that the Government intended to proceed with the whole Bill. "Then," said O'Connell, "there is only one course for you—you must resign; for otherwise, after the manner you have acted to me, you will be guilty of a deception on me." Littleton did not see it in the same frank light. Trusting to O'Connell's sense of honour restraining him from revealing their secret negotiations, he clung to his office. But O'Connell felt that one so grossly deceived as he had been was absolved from his pledge of secrecy. He had sold the seat for Wexford to the Government for a stipulated price, which they now refused to pay. He explained the whole transaction to the House of Commons in a painful scene, each gentleman declaring upon his honour that the other had given an untrue report of what had passed between them.

More resignations, 7th July 1834.

This brought on another Cabinet crisis. Brougham sat tight; but Althorp and Littleton resigned, and Lord Grey, in forwarding their resignations to the King, asked leave to retire also, dis-

[1] *Annual Register*, 1833, p. 102.

trusting his power to control a divided Cabinet without the support of his well-tried lieutenant in the House of Commons.

And thus the great Reform Ministry fell asunder, and with it disappeared from the foremost place one of the noblest, purest, most consistent characters in British politics. Grey had lived seventy years, whereof he had spent forty earnestly working for parliamentary reform. None shall accuse him of indolence or timidity because, although still vigorous, he handed over to a younger man the task of controlling the powerful engine he had called into being.

The King also was old, and sighed for a coalition of moderate men. He sent for Lord Melbourne and desired him to form a Ministry which should include Wellington, Peel, and Stanley; but Melbourne begged to be excused. Then the King told him to choose his own colleagues, but to communicate to the leaders of the Opposition what he had desired.

Lord Melbourne forms a Ministry, July 1834.

And now a strange thing happened. It was Brougham's perfidy about the Coercion Bill that had precipitated the crisis; Littleton having been only his instrument; but the immediate cause of Grey's resignation was the loss of Althorp. Now, however, Althorp received a letter signed by 206 Whigs (or Liberals, as they were coming to be called by this time),[1] begging him to withdraw his resignation. He consented to do so, on condition that Littleton should be received back also; and thus was Grey sacrificed, while Brougham—*causa teterimma* of the mess—and Althorp and Littleton remained in power. "Well," wrote the mercurial Creevey to his stepdaughter, "you see our Government is still in, and I believe quite safe now until Parliament meets again." The event was to justify what Disraeli said many years later, that the life of any administration was never worth three months' purchase.

During those three months, however, Melbourne's government were able to complete a piece of most important work which their predecessors had left unfinished. The Poor Law Act of 1795[2] had been long enough in operation to

[1] The earliest recognition by Wellington of the term "Conservative" to describe his party occurs in a letter to Lady Salisbury, 28th March 1833.

[2] 36 George III. c. 23.

convert the majority of the working classes, especially in agricultural districts, into paupers, which was very far from the intention of those who promoted that piece of legislation. Sincere and humane in their desire to better the lot of the poor, they modified the administration of relief by departing from the principle that all able-bodied persons who could not or would not support themselves by labour should go into the workhouse. By the Act of 1795 magistrates were empowered to order outdoor relief at their discretion, that is, by weekly doles paid to paupers in their own dwellings.

Distress of the labouring classes.

At first sight this appeared at once merciful and economical—merciful, because it brought aid to the needy without uprooting them from their own firesides; economical, because it was far cheaper to pay a pittance to enable a man to keep himself than to defray his entire maintenance in the workhouse. But the system had taken effect in an unforeseen direction. A subsidy, however trifling, from the rates enabled a workman to accept a smaller wage for his labour than would support a workman not in receipt of relief. Farmers naturally took advantage of this. The independent labourer, requiring a living wage, was underbid by those in receipt of parochial relief, and was forced himself to come upon the rates. The vicious system spread from parish to parish and from county to county, until it became an almost universal practice for the parish to pay part of the labourers' wages and the employer the rest. Thoughtful men perceived that within the course of thirty years the rural labourers of England had been turned into a race of paupers.

To cleanse this Augean stable was among the earliest tasks to which Lord Grey had summoned the new Parliament in 1832. It is impossible not to admire the spirit with which this beneficent reform was undertaken and carried through. Preliminary and searching inquiry being indispensable, commissioners were appointed under Bishop Blomfield of London. Their report, delivered early in 1834, described a condition of things hardly credible at the present time. But it did more than describe: it prescribed the

remedy, which the Government, to its lasting credit, immediately embodied in a Bill, introduced by Lord Althorp in April 1832. Its main provisions were the abolition of outdoor relief to the able-bodied, the appointment of permanent Commissioners who should formulate uniform rules for methods of relief and regulation of workhouses; recognition of place of birth as constituting "settlement,"[1] and alteration of the law of bastardy under which any man was liable to be imprisoned for the aliment of a child on the unsupported oath of the mother. Henceforward the statutory duty of supporting an illegitimate child was to be cast upon the mother.[2]

The New Poor Law, 1834.

The Bill was well received by the House of Commons, only Cobbett and a handful of Radicals opposing the reform on the ground that it would relieve rich ratepayers and rob the poor. The second reading was carried by 319 votes to 20, but it did not reach the House of Lords until after Lord Grey had resigned. Wellington, true to his principle of supporting the King's Government when he could, annoyed his more militant followers by refraining from all except discriminating criticism.[3] When at last the new Poor Law was safely inscribed in the statute book it represented the combined views of Whigs and Tories overriding those of men who claimed to be the special champions of the poor.

Howbeit, Ministers reaped no immediate reward in gratitude. Misfortune dogged them to the very close of this session of mischance. The Coercion Bill, main source

[1] Hitherto a year's residence in any parish had constituted settlement with a claim on the rates of that parish, wherefore farmers had been in the habit of hiring labourers for 51 weeks.

[2] No provision in the Bill proved so distasteful to the sense of members as this, which seemed to lay the punishment for immorality upon the weaker partner. But the old law exposed innocent men to defamation and punishment at the mercy of any parish drab, and its evils were fully set forth in the report of the Poor Law Commission. The law of bastardy is now regulated by 7 and 8 Vict. c. 101, and 8 and 9 Vict. c. 10.

[3] "I decline," he wrote to Lord Londonderry on 17th June, "to make the Poor Law Bill a party question, or to oppose any provision in it of which, when I see it, I shall approve. . . . I do not choose to be the person to excite a quarrel between the two Houses of Parliament. This quarrel will occur in its time, and the House of Lords will probably be overwhelmed. But it shall not be owing to any action of mine." (Original at Wynyard Park.)

of the trouble, had been withdrawn and a milder measure had been introduced to conciliate O'Connell's opposition to the Tithes Bill. That doughty patriot allowed the Coercion Bill to go through on 26th July; but three days later he divided the House on the motion for Committee on the Tithes Bill. Beaten on that, handsomely, he scored a great success next day. Littleton had encumbered his Bill with a plan for the conversion of tithe into a voluntary rent charge, so complicated that, even if he understood it himself, he totally failed to bring it to the understanding of the House. Stanley having turned the scheme into ridicule, O'Connell came forward with a far simpler one, which the Government, loyal to their colleague, refused to accept. But, whereas O'Connell's proposal had manifestly commended itself to members in general, Littleton moved that the amendment should be postponed until the report stage, in which case "he would not pledge himself what course Government might pursue." O'Connell was far too wary a tactician to stoop to such a lure in the waning days of a session. He insisted on a division, which left Ministers in a minority of forty-nine.

Ministers defeated on the Tithes Bill, 30th July 1834.

The whole machinery of the Bill having been thoroughly dislocated by this amendment, poor Littleton, in a House convulsed with laughter, moved the omission of 111 out of its 172 clauses. Reaching the Lords in this eviscerated condition, nobody was surprised that it met its death at their hands. And so the session of 1834 came to an end, memorable, not only for the loss of half the Cabinet by secession and resignation, but also for the achievement of a Government, thus unsettled, in carrying out so beneficent a reform as that of the Poor Law. The ample majority on the ministerial benches had not saved Government from several defeats in the House of Commons; but there was always held in reserve the restorative of a vote of confidence. Nevertheless, mere numbers could not have pulled them through some of their difficulties but for two saving factors in the situation. One of these was the line taken by the Conservative leaders. Although repeatedly and angrily pressed by

Eldon,[1] Londonderry, the Duke of Buckingham, and other high Tories to fight every Bill to the last clause, neither Wellington nor Peel would depart from the principle they had laid down, that measures were to be dealt with on their merits, not according to the political creed of their authors.

The other source of strength to Ministers was the character of Lord Althorp. As heir to exalted rank and corresponding wealth he was exempt from all suspicion of self-seeking. Almost as devoid of eloquence as Castlereagh, he was his equal in personal charm, and he secured the confidence of the House of Commons in even fuller measure. Men of all parties agreed that Althorp was perfectly "straight," but perhaps few of them realised what a pillar of strength he was to the Ministry until he was removed from the House of Commons by the death of his father, Earl Spencer, on 10th November 1834. Melbourne realised it at once. He wrote to the King on the 12th asking whether it was his pleasure that he "should attempt to make such fresh arrangements as might enable his Majesty's present servants to continue to conduct the affairs of the country, or whether his Majesty deems it advisable to adopt any other course." Next day he waited on the King at Brighton, and, it is said, submitted the names of Spring Rice, Lord John Russell, and Abercromby, one of whom might meet his Majesty's approval as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons.[2]

The King dismisses his Ministers, 14th Nov. 1834.

Greatly as the King longed to be quit of the Whigs, he probably would have accepted one of these gentlemen and allowed Melbourne to go on, but for the recent behaviour of one member of the Cabinet, which had thoroughly disgusted not only the King but the country. Brougham looked upon himself as the only fit successor to Lord Grey, and had never forgiven himself for eclipsing his chance of

[1] "Heaven grant that this new mode of treating the poor and needy may not bring forth those fruits which I, for one, anticipate. They are to proceed in this hazardous measure to-night; but 'unto their assembly mine honour shall not be united.'" (Lord Eldon to Lady F. J. Bankes, 23rd July 1834.)

[2] Greville, iii. 143.

the premiership by accepting the woolsack. During the autumn he had made a political tour in Scotland, delivering almost innumerable speeches, in which he posed alternately as an out-and-out Radical and as a critic of the Government for going too far and too fast. Thereby he had succeeded in displeasing both moderate and extreme men. People were entitled and accustomed to expect dignity and reserve in the utterances of the highest legal officer of State. The press, over which Brougham had once exercised much control, was almost unanimous in condemnation, and in no measured terms. The *Times* compared him to "an itinerant mountebank" and referred to his "unnumbered antics and meannesses"; the *Courier* described his northern tour as "a revolting spectacle committing and degrading the Government." His old friends pronounced him mad,[1] and he had created a fierce and dexterous enemy in the person of his former colleague, Lord Durham, against whom Brougham wrote a virulent anonymous article in the *Edinburgh Review*.[2] Durham replied by giving Brougham the lie at Glasgow on 31st October. It was an open secret that Brougham had forfeited the last shred of the King's confidence; but Melbourne suggested no means of getting rid of him; so King William determined to be quit of the whole Whig crew. Availing himself of Melbourne's offer to resign, he handed him a letter on the morning of the 14th, in which he said that, having regard to the withdrawal of Lord Althorp from the House of Commons, and also to the division of opinion in the Cabinet on the question of the Irish Church, "he did not think he would be acting fairly or honourably by his lordship if he called upon him for the continuance of his services in a position of which the tenure appeared to the King to be so precarious," and informed him at the same time that he had decided to send for the Duke of Wellington.[3]

[1] "His going to Scotland at all with the purpose he did—to rob Lord Grey of his fame—was an act of insanity, and the disease has increased since" (*Creevey*, ii. 289).

[2] October 1834.

[3] It will be observed that Melbourne had, technically, placed his resignation in the King's hands by the letter of 12th November. Virtually,

Easy-going Melbourne accepted his fall with the best possible grace, actually waiting until Sir Herbert Taylor had written the King's summons to Wellington, and driving back to London with the letter in his carriage. Under the seal of secrecy, he told Palmerston and Brougham what had happened. Brougham most unscrupulously communicated the news to the *Times* and *Chronicle*, telling them that it was the result of a conspiracy between the Queen and the Tories. As a consequence, the town was placarded with posters—"The Queen has done it all!" Never was slander more unfounded. Good Queen Adelaide had no political views of her own, accepting without question those of her husband, and absolutely incapable of initiative or intrigue. Much light has been thrown upon her gentle, unassuming disposition by the recent publication of Queen Victoria's correspondence.

Brougham's dastardly slander roused the old King's ire. Wellington, arriving at Brighton in response to his summons, told the King plainly that under existing conditions the head of the Government ought to be in the House of Commons, and recommended that Peel should be sent for. Peel was in Rome; but the King would not await his return. He insisted upon Melbourne and his colleagues vacating their offices at once, appointing Wellington First Lord of the Treasury, and bidding him in addition take over the Home, Foreign, and Colonial Offices. The Duke could not, indeed, exercise the judicial function of Lord Chancellor, but he wrote a note of four lines to Brougham, informing him that "he had his Majesty's commands to request him to deliver up the seal on Friday next at 2 o'clock." Brougham replied on four sides of large letter paper, leaving the Duke in doubt whether he meant to give the seal up or not.[1] Dangerously

Wellington entrusted with the seals of office, 15th Nov. 1834.

however, it was an act of dismissal, the King avowing it in a subsequent letter to Sir R. Peel as "his own immediate and exclusive act" (*Peel Letters*, ii. 288). Walpole (iii. 275) reads the King a long lecture upon the impropriety of his conduct, which, says he, "ensured the Whigs an additional six years of office." That may be so; but at least the impossible Brougham was removed from office for ever.

[1] The originals of these letters are at Apsley House.

unconstitutional! grumbled the Whigs; Monstrously tyrannical! shrieked the Radicals; but the populace, who on the seventeenth anniversary of Waterloo had hooted and stoned the Duke as the enemy of reform, now doffed hats and cheered the well-known figure riding about from office to office, "worked," as he himself expressed it, "as no post-horse at Hounslow ever was."

It has been the fashion to underrate Wellington as a politician. He is almost invariably made to appear as a narrow-minded Tory and unbending aristocrat; but none knew better than he that his party had to move with the times. In forwarding the King's summons to Peel, he wrote: "I think you will find the Tories, my lords in particular, very well disposed to go all reasonable lengths in the way of reform of institutions. . . . I have been astonished at their being so docile."[1]

Personally, Peel and Wellington had been on terms the reverse of cordial for many years, greatly to the concern of the friends of both.[2] It is, therefore, no trivial token of the Duke's true magnanimity, too often masked by a brusque manner, that he should have shown such perfect loyalty to the absent Peel. He had only to say the word, and he, not Peel, would have been First Minister. So far from encouraging the King to precipitancy, he had considerable difficulty in restraining him. "The King," he wrote to Lord Melville on 23rd November, "is in great spirits; but he is, thank God between ourselves! gone out of town. He is becoming a little in a hurry, and I am afraid that I should not have kept him quiet."[3]

Peel received the King's letter at a ball in Rome on 25th November, together with a list of Ministers

[1] Draft at Apsley House.

[2] On 1st May 1834 they met at dinner at Mr. Arbuthnot's who became so apprehensive of imminent rupture between them that he wrote to Lord Aberdeen: "I know not which of the two is in fault. Perhaps there is no fault on either side, merely misconception. . . . The Duke, I know, imagines Peel does not like him. In this I am sure he is in error. If there is one subject upon which, when I was seeing Peel daily, he spoke to me more than upon all others, it was in praise and admiration of the Duke. . . . It seems therefore to me that the one thing wanted is that they should understand one another." (*Peel Letters*, ii. 232.)

[3] Draft at Apsley House.

drawn up for his consideration by Wellington. Starting at once, he travelled home post-haste, and having at his disposal exactly the same facilities of travel as the later Roman emperors—namely, good roads and rapid relays—he accomplished the journey in the same time as Hadrian or Severus might have done. Arriving in London on the morning of 9th December, he set to work forming a Ministry. Much to his disappointment, Stanley and his friends held aloof. They would willingly have served under Peel, said Stanley, had not the new Cabinet been stamped "Tory" by the King first placing his confidence in Wellington.[1]

Sir Robert Peel's first administration, 1834.

Before the end of the year Peel had got his team into harness, having on 17th December issued an address to his constituents which has become known as the Tamworth Manifesto, explaining the principles by which he intended to regulate his policy. In this document he expressed acceptance of the Reform Act as "a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question." Notable, this, and important, forasmuch as many expressions in Wellington's letters in the early months of 1834 show that he and many of his party contemplated partial repeal of the Reform Act as both feasible and desirable.

The whole address is worth reperusal,[2] even at this distance of time, marking as it does the conversion of the Tories into Conservatives, not only in name but in spirit, and their entry upon that long course of reform in which they

[1] Lord Stanley, addressing his Lancashire constituents, gave a different reason for declining to join Peel's Ministry—a more intelligible one, too, after the Tamworth manifesto. Having referred to Peel's offer to himself as being "precisely such as could be made by one honourable man to another," he went on: "If we had agreed to join the new government for the purpose of strengthening it in those liberal measures which I believe it must and will carry into effect, to what calumny and misconstruction would our motives have been exposed. . . . Would it not have been said that our past conduct had been mere matter of intrigue, to enable us to resume office under more promising auspices?" (*Annual Register*, 1835, p. 6.) Stanley did not escape the imputation he dreaded. Peel, who was greatly nettled at his refusal to coalesce, wrote to Croker on 10th Jan. 1835: "I envy not Lord Stanley's *visions* of my place. . . . Mind what I now say to you. If he really entertains the principles he professes, he *shall* not be able to maintain them and oppose me." (Croker, ii. 256.)

[2] It is printed in the *Annual Register*, 1834, p. 340.

have proved quite as energetic, if not so hasty, as those of the other great political party.[1]

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole is somewhat short of justice, I will not say of candour, when he says that Peel's "'frank exposition' must have been bitter reading to some of the members of the new Cabinet" (*England*, iii. 281). He describes Peel as reading to them a letter which "he had addressed to his constituents"; but in fact he submitted the letter to the approval of the Cabinet *before* sending it to Tamworth. See Peel's *Memoirs*, ii. 58.

CHAPTER III

Position of the Government—Burning of the Houses of Parliament—Election of Speaker and defeat of Ministers—Resignation of the Peel Ministry—Lord Melbourne's second administration—The position of Daniel O'Connell—Lord Alvanley's duel with Morgan O'Connell—Irish tithes again—Municipal Corporations Bill—O'Connell's crusade against the Lords—The affair of the Carlow election.

ELECTORAL experts viewed with disapproval Peel's strategy in appealing to the country before meeting Parliament; but he did not relish the prospect of laying his legislative programme before an adverse majority of three to one. Parliament accordingly was dissolved; when it reassembled on 19th February 1835 the Government, though still in a minority, was found to have greatly improved its position in the House of Commons. In the elections, London had given a strong lead against the new Government by returning none but Opposition members for the City and metropolitan boroughs; but in many of the large towns—Bristol, York, Leeds, Newcastle, Hull, Halifax, &c.—seats were captured by the Conservatives. In the counties the Government fared still better; Lord Palmerston losing his seat in Hampshire, and South Lancashire returning Lord Francis Egerton by an immense majority over the former Whig member. On the whole, it was calculated that the Conservative party in the House of Commons had increased from 150 to about 250; and Ministers might look beyond these for discretional support to those moderate Whigs who owned Stanley as leader.[1]

Position of the Government, Feb. 1835.

[1] They were reckoned at about fifty (Greville, iii. 222), but were far from united among themselves (ibid., 228). A letter to the Duke of Wellington from Benjamin Disraeli, who had just been defeated in a contest for High Wycombe, is curious reading in the light of later history. ". . . I have fought our battle and I have lost it by a majority of fourteen. . . . Grey made a violent anti-ministerial speech, and I annihilated him in my reply; but what use is annihilating men out of the House of Commons?"

The curtain rose not only upon an altered Parliament but upon a new stage. "That narrow, dingy room, which, to an unaccustomed eye, looked more like a prison than the palace of the genius of our English legislation"—the chamber wherein the people's representatives had deliberated during nearly three centuries, was no more, for both Houses of Parliament had been burnt down on 16th October 1834. The tally-room of the Exchequer being required for the temporary use of the Court of Bankruptcy, instructions were issued from the Treasury for the destruction of the wooden tallies and foils, the use of which had been discontinued since 1826. The officials appointed to carry this out caused them to be burnt in the nearest fireplaces, which happened to be the stoves used for heating the House of Lords. As the burning went on for ten hours, it is not surprising that the flues became red-hot, the old woodwork caught fire in the evening, and by next morning the building was a heap of smoking ruins. The libraries of both Houses had disappeared with most of their contents;[1] the old paintings in Edward the Confessor's Painted Chamber and St. Stephen's Chapel had been destroyed, also some Elizabethan tapestry representing the Spanish Armada, the test and qualification rolls of the House of Commons, and a large quantity of original records. The firemen and soldiers concentrated effort upon Westminster Hall, and succeeded in saving that historic chamber with its Norman courses laid by William Rufus, and its matchless roof of Kilkenny oak erected by Richard II.

The Houses of Parliament burnt down, 16th Oct. 1834.

The Privy Council, summoned to inquire into the origin of the fire, reflected upon the carelessness of the officials superintending the destruction of the tallies, acquitted the workmen employed of all guilty design, though finding them "justly chargeable with gross neglect, disobedience of orders, and utter disregard of all warnings."[2]

[1] Some volumes, thrown out upon the terrace, were saved, and bear traces of fire and water to this day.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1834, p. 164. The new Houses of Parliament, built to the design of Sir Charles Barry, compose by far the grandest example of Tudor Gothic—a style which, though weak and debased, has the recom-

The calamity was not wholly unmixed. The House of Commons, originally designed for the Parliament of England only, had proved wretchedly inadequate for the Imperial Parliament of the triple realm. Barry's Place of Westminster, with its soaring towers and spacious river-front, worthily represents the seat of Imperial Government.

King William offered the houseless Commons a temporary home in Buckingham Palace, his predecessor's preposterous Palace of Pimlico;[1] but it was decided to patch up the walls of the House of Lords, which were still standing, to serve as a makeshift for the representative chamber; while the Lords contented themselves with Edward the Confessor's Painted Chamber, which had been gutted but not destroyed.

The mood of the Opposition was soon manifest. No mercy from us, Sir Robert! for, cheap as many of us held the defunct Ministry, we will show you what we think of the King forcing *you* upon the country. They seized the very first occasion—the election of a Speaker—to give Peel a foretaste of what was in store for him. Sir Charles Manners-Sutton[2] had occupied the chair since 1817. He was a Tory, of course, but in 1832, when he expressed a strong wish to retire, he had yielded to Lord Grey's earnest request that he would afford the first reformed Parliament the benefit of his experienced guidance. In 1835 Grey had no voice in the counsels of his old colleagues. Lord John Russell was leader of the Opposition, and, lending too ready

Election of Speaker and defeat of Ministers, 19th Feb. 1835.

mendation of being exclusively English. Begun in 1840, the palace was finished in 1857 at a cost of about £3,000,000. It covers about 8 acres of ground, and the Victoria Tower over the royal entrance is 340 feet high. Barry's original design was to continue the buildings right round Palace Yard, providing accommodation for the chief departments of State, with a grand entrance opposite Whitehall.

[1] This deplorable pile commemorates the extravagance of George IV. and the feebleness of his architect Nash. It cost a million sterling: of the two gateways, the Marble Arch, which cost £100,000, has been removed to the further end of Hyde Park; that on Constitution Hill cost £40,000. "Can one be surprised," exclaimed Creevey, who suggested that the Palace should be called the Brunswick Hotel, "at people becoming Radical with such specimens of royal prodigality before their eyes? to say nothing of the character of such royalties themselves." (*Creevey*, ii. 308.)

[2] Created Viscount Canterbury in 1835.

an ear to groundless reports that Manners-Sutton had intrigued for the fall of the late Administration, he declared that "a great public principle" was at stake, and persuaded the reluctant Abercromby to allow himself to be nominated.[1]

Manners-Sutton defended himself in the House of Commons, denying, "on the credit and honour of a gentleman," the allegation that "he had busied himself in the subversion of the late Government, that he had assisted with others in the formation of a new Government, and that he had counselled and advised the dissolution of the late Parliament." Peel showed matters in a new light by explaining that he had invited Manners-Sutton to take office, and that he had declined it, lest, after occupying the chair for eighteen years, he should lower its dignity by returning to the floor of the House as a member of the Government. Nevertheless, and despite Stanley's eloquent championship of Manners-Sutton, Ministers were defeated, Abercromby being elected speaker by 316 votes to 306.[2]

The King sought to console Peel by a long letter in which he declared that, if the Whigs were forced upon him again, "they might become his Ministers, but never his *confidential* servants."[3] Time had been when such an assurance would have been of much avail, but that time had passed away. Whigs, Radicals, and Repealers, sinking vital differences for the occasion, and whetted by the taste of blood, hunted eagerly as a united pack. An amendment to the Address, expressing disapproval of the work of reform having been needlessly interrupted by a dissolution, was carried by a majority of seven. The Opposition had reckoned on a majority of thirty or forty,[4] but Stanley upset their calculations by supporting Ministers.

Beaten twice in the first week of the session, Peel was determined not to strike his flag till he had shown to the country the nature of his policy. He tabled four measures of a nature which no Liberal could object to, save from

[1] The correspondence is printed in the *Annual Register*, 1835, p. 19.

[2] Exactly seventy years were to run before a Conservative was again elected Speaker in the person of the Right Hon. J. W. Lowther.

[3] *Peel Letters*, ii. 288.

[4] Greville, iii. 221.

motives of faction.[1] Object they did, however, and to some purpose. They inflicted six defeats in six weeks upon the Government, the last of the series, on 7th April, arising out of Russell's cherished design of appropriating the surplus revenue of the Irish Church to secular purposes. Next day Peel waited upon the King to resign what had been proved a hopeless endeavour. His four months of office had been a period of unrelieved adversity, yet they had enabled him to set the stamp of rational progress upon his party, and raised himself to the most commanding position therein.

Resignation of the Peel Ministry, 8th April 1835.

The King, to quote his own words, was forced "to sacrifice feeling, comfort, and rooted opinions,"[2] but he acted with perfect dignity and calmness. He sent for Lord Grey, but Grey declined the task of forming a Ministry. A letter, signed by Melbourne, Lansdowne, Vassall Holland, Palmerston, and Spring Rice, begging to reconsider his refusal, did not alter his resolve;[3] and Lord Melbourne undertook the duty once more. One of Melbourne's chief difficulties was to exclude some of his former colleagues from office. Brougham's talents were transcendent, his energy exhaustless, but, reined by no scruples and lashed by an ill and impish humour, he had forfeited the confidence of men of all parties. Yet would he prove a formidable foe on the flank of any Ministry, even in the House of Lords.[4] It has been repeatedly asserted that Brougham was refused office in compliance with the King's strong objection to him.[5] The King may very well have shared that objection with many of his subjects; but it was not his act that caused the Great Seal to be placed in commission, instead of re-

Lord Melbourne's second administration, April 1835.

[1] A Bill to relieve Dissenters from disabilities in regard to marriages, another for reforming and consolidating Ecclesiastical Courts, a plan for the commutation of English tithes, and resolutions upon which to frame a Bill dealing with Irish tithes.

[2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 288.

[3] *Melbourne Papers*, 267.

[4] When he entered the House of Lords on becoming Lord Chancellor in 1830, he took the title of Lord Brougham and Vaux. The wits declared he should have had that of *Vox et præterea nihil*.

[5] Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, viii. 467; Walpole's *England*, iii. 304; Torrens's *Melbourne*, ii. 112.

calling Brougham to the woolsack. Three months before, on 23rd January, Melbourne, discussing with Lord Grey the possibility of his being called on to form a Government, wrote as follows: "I will have nothing more to do with Brougham. I need not state to you the reasons of this determination. They resolve themselves readily under two heads—viz. his whole character and his whole conduct."[1] Moreover, it is not true to state, as has been stated, that Brougham was given to believe that his exclusion was due to the King's objection. The amazing frankness of Melbourne's letters to Brougham can have left him in no doubt whatever of the depth to which he had fallen in the esteem of his former colleagues and of the country.[2]

Besides Brougham, there were those of his former colleagues in regard to whom Melbourne had opened his mind freely to Lord Grey. "I will have nothing to do with Durham. For obvious reasons[3] I forbear to state to you the reasons for this decision; nor need I account for my third peremptory exclusion, which is O'Connell. . . . I have omitted to mention minor difficulties, which, however, would be found sufficiently embarrassing—such as Wellesley and Littleton, whom undoubtedly it was the most daring temerity, and only to be palliated by the very equivocal position in which both Brougham and Althorp had placed themselves,[4] to leave in Ireland at the end of last session, and who lost no time in proving by the most absurd and reckless conduct that they had learnt nothing by experience."[5]

Durham, who had voluntarily retired from the Grey Cabinet in 1833, was easily passed over: more about him hereafter. Littleton was disposed of by that expedient so dear to embarrassed premiers—a peerage. Englishmen have set an example to the world by their solicitude in preserving the finest strains in racehorses, in oxen, and even in pigs and poultry, but continue perfectly indifferent to the qualities of men chosen as sires of future legislators. It is

[1] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 237. [2] Ibid., pp. 257–264.
[3] Durham was Grey's son-in-law.
[4] By the intrigue with O'Connell.
[5] *Melbourne Papers*, pp. 238–239.



Emery Walker phot

William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne,

from the painting by John Partridge

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1910

not the Pitts, the Foxes, the Cannings, the Peels, the Brights, the Gladstones, who mostly are called to the hereditary chamber; the surest passports are wealth, lest party funds should languish, or failing capacity for office, lest an old comrade's feelings should be hurt.

There remained the far more delicate question about O'Connell. Without a rival in debate save Lord Stanley (and Stanley was now to be accounted a free-lance), O'Connell and his forty or fifty followers must be reckoned, since the Lichfield House compact, as incorporated with the Government forces; yet they were outspoken Repealers, and in those days Englishmen were not careful to distinguish repeal from rebellion. O'Connell was supreme in Ireland; he had six millions of people at his back; they supported him with an annual tribute which, in 1834, had amounted to £13,000;[1] he had three sons and three near kinsmen in Parliament, and he was known to desire office as an "opportunity of proving to the Protestants of Ireland that when in power he could and would do them justice."[2]

The position of Daniel O'Connell, April 1835.

The King, fearing that Melbourne would yield to the exigency of the position, wrote to express his resolve not to accept O'Connell, Joseph Hume, or Shiel as Ministers. The Prime Minister replied with great dignity:—

"Viscount Melbourne must distinctly declare that, whilst he trusts he is incapable of recommending to your Majesty any individuals whose character and conduct appear to him to disqualify them from holding any situation of trust and responsibility, he can neither admit nor acquiesce in any general or particular exclusion, and that he must reserve to himself the power of recommending for employment any one of your Majesty's subjects who is qualified by law to serve your Majesty."[3]

Never before had the rights of a Minister in a constitutional monarchy been so boldly set forth, so decisively claimed, and never since has occasion arisen to remind a British monarch of the limitations of his prerogative.

In the end Melbourne's Cabinet was formed of twelve Whigs. Brougham's feelings had been respected by putting

[1] Torrens's *Melbourne*, ii. 119. [2] Ibid., 121.
[3] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 274.

the Great Seal in commission; nor was there in the whole Ministry a single Radical, for Sir John Cam Hobhouse, who was President of the Board of Control, had greatly modified his views since his contest with de Lacy Evans.

When Parliament reassembled on 12th May, the seat of the leader of the House of Commons was vacant. Lord John Russell had seized the occasion of the adjournment to conclude his marriage with Lord Ribblesdale's widow,[1] but on renewing his suit to the electors of South Devon he was jilted by a majority of 627 votes. Staffordshire and Inverness-shire also returned Conservatives in room of Littleton and Charles Grant, who had been raised to the peerage. Lord Palmerston, too, the Foreign Secretary, was without a seat, having been ousted from Hampshire at the general election in January. Warned thus of their waning popularity in the country, Ministers were more than ever at the mercy of their new allies, the Repealers and the Radicals.[2] No office had been offered to propitiate them and cement the alliance, yet there were no signs of defection. People were curious to know what pledges had been exacted to retain them. On 18th April Lord Alvanley had demanded in the House of Lords that Melbourne should explain upon what terms he had secured O'Connell's support.

"I am asked," he replied, "how far I coincide in the opinions of Mr. O'Connell about the Union with Ireland: I answer—not at all. I am asked whether I am to have the aid of Mr. O'Connell: I answer—I cannot tell. And lastly, on what terms: I answer—I have made no terms with him whatever."[3]

Next day, when Colonel Sibthorpe addressed a similar inquiry to Ministers in the House of Commons, O'Connell took occasion to compliment him on his tone and manner compared with those of the "bloated buffoon" in the other House. Followed a challenge from Alvanley as matter

[1] Lord John's diminutive stature earned him from irreverent persons the nickname of "the Widow's Mite."

[2] "O'Connell holds the destiny of the Government in his hands, and is acknowledged to be the greatest man going" (Greville, iii. 235).

[3] Torrens's *Melbourne*, ii. 123. In his account of this transaction, Spencer Walpole describes Alvanley as a Tory peer. It happens that he was a Whig, having asked Melbourne for a post in the Household and been refused. (*Creevey*, ii. 305.)

of course, but O'Connell had been for twenty years under a vow never to fight another duel,[1] and declined to go out. But his son Morgan took up the quarrel and offered to give Alvanley satisfaction. They met; some powder was burnt, but no blood was shed. A Methodist parson appeared on the ground and endeavoured to dissuade them from fighting, bidding Alvanley think of his soul. "Yes," quoth Alvanley, "but my body now is in the greater danger!"[2]

Duel of Morgan O'Connell with Lord Alvanley, April 1835.

So general was the belief in a secret understanding between the Government and the Repealers that the Dublin populace gave Lord Mulgrave, the new Lord-Lieutenant, an enthusiastic reception, escorting him to the Castle with bands and banners inscribed with repeal sentiments. Lord Wellesley, whose proceedings as Lord-Lieutenant only two years previously had given deep offence to Protestants and Unionists in Ireland, resigned his office of Lord Chamberlain in disgust at the countenance shown to repealers.

Lord John Russell, having provided a lucrative post for Colonel Fox, member for Stroud, that gentleman willingly resigned in his favour, and the House of Commons welcomed back its leader. Similar means provided a seat for Lord Palmerston at Tiverton. Melbourne had the good sense to limit his legislative programme to two main measures, one dealing with the reform of municipal corporations, the other with the old and thorny subject of Irish tithes.

To take the last-named first, there would have been little difficulty in getting the Bill through both Houses, for it ran on much the same lines as one introduced by the late Government, converting tithe into a rent charge upon the landowner amounting to 68¼ per cent. of the old tithe and partly compensating tithe-owners out of the Perpetuity Purchase Fund. Peel expressed himself perfectly satisfied with this proposal, but he offered the strongest opposition to another part of the Bill providing for the appropriation of surplus Church funds to secular purposes. In vain he pointed out that this was the only controversial part of the measure, that it had nothing to

Irish tithes again, 1835.

[1] He killed his man, Mr. d'Esterre, in a duel in Dublin in 1815.

[2] Greville, iii. 257.

do with commutation or conversion of tithe, and that it ought to be dealt with by a separate Bill. He allowed the Bill to be read a second time without a division; a debate on his proposal to bisect the Bill was begun upon going into committee; he was beaten by thirty-seven votes; the Bill went to the Lords, who passed it after striking out all the clauses providing for the alienation of Church property, whereupon Melbourne abandoned the Bill.

The Municipal Corporations Bill was more adroitly handled, and provided machinery for a reform hardly less searching than that of the parliamentary franchise. So long before as 1819 Lord Archibald Hamilton had carried against Ministers a motion for inquiry into the practices and condition of Scottish municipalities, and these had been reconstituted in 1833 by an Act vesting the election of councillors in the £10 householders. In that year commissioners were appointed to inquire into the larger subject of English municipal corporations. Their report, not a unanimous one, was made in the spring of 1835, and contained grave reflections upon the corrupt condition of very many town councils, affirmed a general distrust of self-elected corporations, not only as governing bodies, but especially in their magisterial capacity, and quoted many examples of the misapplication of public funds, often amounting to gross malversation. It was the old story of abuse of irresponsible authority. The election of councillors was vested in the freemen of a borough, that is, those upon whom the council, or the territorial magnate who controlled the council, chose to confer the freedom. Sometimes the system worked admirably, although the theoretically elective constitution was a mere farce. Liverpool, with a population of 165,000, was governed by a council elected by 5000 freemen, yet Liverpool was one of the best administered corporations in the realm. Aldborough, on the other hand, was the type of an overtly and systematically venal community, the recognised tariff for a freeman's vote being £35. The council was nominated by Lord Hertford, who paid for the votes necessary to return himself and his eight nominees. Formerly it used to return two Tory members to Parliament, also nominees of Lord

Municipal Corporations Bill, 1835.

Hertford; it was natural enough, therefore, that Russell should pounce upon it for argument in support of his measure. But Peel, while cordially supporting the general principle of the Bill, had no difficulty in showing that Tory magnates had no monopoly in gerrymandering. He retorted upon Russell by citing the case of Derby, a Whig borough, where freemen were only admitted on the nomination of the Duke of Devonshire, who paid their fees of admission. On the general question he criticised the report of the commissioners as being unjust to those corporations which had faithfully fulfilled their duties by involving all in indiscriminate censure. There were notable instances of sagacious and faithful administration by the elect of the freemen. Still, the freemen were a close corporation; it was impossible to defend the anomaly of withholding the right of electing their own local government from the general body of citizens who possessed the parliamentary franchise. The Bill was an inevitable corollary of parliamentary reform. It applied to 183 English and Welsh towns, giving to every ratepayer who had been three years resident in a borough a vote in the election of its councillors. Charities were no longer to be administered by town councils, but by committees separately elected for the purpose. Exclusive rights of trading were to cease, saving the life-interests of individuals; freemen of the old kind were to be allowed to die out, the only qualification of future freemen being occupation and payment of rates.

Drastic, but discriminate, so far. A further provision for depriving freemen of the parliamentary franchise, specially reserved to them under the Reform Act, was the only point in the Bill to which Peel offered strenuous resistance. "They find," he wrote to Croker, "that the freemen vote in the Conservative interest more frequently than in the Radical, and forthwith it is proposed to abolish freemen. And this is done, not manfully, not directly, but under the pretence of improving Corporations."[1]

Notwithstanding this blot, Peel and the Opposition lent their aid so effectively that the great Bill of two hundred clauses passed speedily through all its stages in the

[1] Croker, ii. 280.

Commons, landing in the House of Lords during the dog-days. There it encountered graver peril. Eldon, in his eighty-third year, was powerless to injure it; but from his sick-room in Hamilton Place he denounced its iniquity to all who would listen to him. "Its interference with vested rights shocked his sense of equity even more than the sweeping clauses of the Reform Act. To set at nought ancient charters as so many bits of decayed parchment, and destroy the archives of town-halls, seemed in the eyes of the old Magistrate, for so many years the guardian of corporate rights, a crowning iniquity."[1]

There were enough Tories of the old school in the House of Lords to fulfil Eldon's wishes about the Bill, had Wellington allowed them rein; but he, though distrusting the plan of "a little republic in every town,"[2] co-operated with Peel in saving a measure which was so little to his liking. Howbeit, it was essentially a lawyer's Bill, and Wellington was led further than he was aware by Lyndhurst. It returned to the Commons at the end of August, so sorely maimed that its authors disowned it. The Lords had not been content with restoring the parliamentary franchise to freemen; they had also re-established them in their perpetual private rights in chartered property. They had introduced aldermen as life-members of town-councils, fixed a property qualification for councillors, and altered many other important details.

"Few people can judge of the difficulty there has frequently been of maintaining harmony between the various branches of the Conservative party—the great majority in the House of Lords and the minority in the House of Commons consisting of very different elements that had been in open conflict within a recent period. It was necessary . . . to conduct an opposition on Conservative principles—almost a contradiction in terms; for the recourse to faction, or temporary alliances with extreme opinions for the purposes of faction, is not reconcilable with *Conservative* opposition."[3]

During the recess O'Connell preached a crusade in the north against the Lords. Strongly as Radical doctrines

[1] *Law Magazine*, No. xliv. [2] *Salisbury MSS.*, 1835.
[3] *Peel Letters*, ii. 338.

prevailed in that quarter, he only succeeded in doing nearly as much damage to his own reputation as Brougham had done to his in the previous autumn. Passing from Manchester to Newcastle, from Edinburgh to Glasgow, he attracted great audiences by his reputation as orator, and endeavoured to kindle their passions by sheer violence of vituperation. "Banditti," "rogues," "obscene animals," "a set of stupid, ignorant, half-mad fops and coxcombs"[1]—such terms as these applied to the peers might be relied on to rouse devilry in an Irish mob, but proved a poor substitute for argument when addressed to hard-headed north-countrymen.

O'Connell's crusade against the Lords, Oct. 1835.

O'Connell returned to London to find his character involved in a discreditable affair arising out of the election for county Carlow. Two Conservatives having been unseated on petition, O'Connell called upon a certain Mr. Raphael and offered to sell him the seat for £2000—that is, £1000 down and £1000 more if Mr. Raphael was returned. The bargain was struck; Raphael, though he had never been in Carlow in his life, paid the first £1000, was elected, but was in turn unseated on petition.

The affair of the Carlow election, 31st Oct. 1835.

O'Connell claimed the second £1000; Raphael refused, on the ground that his election had not been successful. Moreover, he had the indelicacy to ask what O'Connell had done with one-fifth of the first £1000, seeing that the election had cost only £800. Failing to obtain any explanation, Raphael published the whole correspondence in the *Times*,[2] inviting the opinion of the public upon the conduct of a politician who had claimed, above all things, a reputation for sincerity and honesty.

The affair made a great noise. Sir Francis Burdett brought it before the management of Brookes's Club, demanding the expulsion of O'Connell, who, in the opinion of most men, had long since forfeited his title to be considered a gentleman by habitual and cynical disregard of

[1] *Annual Register*, 1835, pp. 369, 371.

[2] 31st Oct. 1835. The correspondence is printed in the *Annual Register*, 1835, pp. 146–153.

the obligations of honour, coarsely insulting individuals, and declining to give the only satisfaction recognised by the social code of the day.[1] It is notoriously difficult to expel any member from a club so long as he conforms to the rules thereof. O'Connell remained; but Burdett took his name off the books, and so did Stanley, Graham, and sixty other members.

On his next visit to the north, O'Connell was treated less ceremoniously than he had been by the Committee of Brookes's. Young Mr. W. E. Gladstone, son of a Liverpool merchant and Conservative member for Newark, wrote to Peel describing a scene in Liverpool:—

"O'Connell ventured to visit the news room which the merchants frequent, and which was extremely full upon his entrance. Great clamour was excited by his appearance, and he attempted in vain to obtain a hearing. But as he did not seem inclined to desist, the whole affair ended by a movement of the mass which drove him towards the door, and summarily ejected him."[2]

[1] Greville, iii. 321.

[2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 327.

CHAPTER IV

Insecure position of the Government—The King's displeasure with Palmerston—and with Lord Glenelg—Sir Christopher Pepys becomes Lord Chancellor—Secession of Stanley, &c., from the Whig party—Irish Corporations Bill—Irish Tithes Bill—English Tithe Commutation Act—Marriage and Registration Acts—Last days of William IV.—Severance of the crowns of Great Britain and Hanover—Accession of Queen Victoria—Dissolution of Parliament—First appearance of Benjamin Disraeli—Queen Victoria and Lord Melbourne.

NOTWITHSTANDING the successful passage of the Municipal Corporations Act, a measure of sufficient magnitude to reflect distinction upon any Ministry, Lord Melbourne felt towards the close of the session of 1835 that his position at the head of his heterogeneous party was well-nigh untenable. The King was at little pains to conceal his hatred of the Whigs. He could not be led to realise the delicacy of a situation wherein the royal prerogative had been brought into contact with new and untried forces in the constitution. Imperfect forbearance or failure of tact might alter at any moment that contact into conflict, which should bring the whole social fabric about their ears. It was a case above all others for leaving responsible Ministers to deal with; yet the King incessantly interfered with criticism, reproach, or impracticable suggestion. When he did express approval, it was coupled with the explanation that it was founded on the belief that he knew Melbourne to be a Conservative at heart.[1] Now this was an in-

Insecure position of the Government, 1835–36.

[1] "The King believes Viscount Melbourne to be a *Conservative* in the truest sense of the word, and to as great a degree as his Majesty himself; though candour obliges him to own that he does not give credit to all his colleagues for the same feeling. . . . It is to these circumstances, as well as to an impression, and possibly a very reasonable one, which his Majesty conceives Viscount Melbourne may harbour of the necessity of yielding to the 'spirit of the times,' that his Majesty ascribes the concurrence of Viscount Melbourne in measures of which the character may not appear to him altogether consistent with the high Conservative feelings for which he gives him credit." (The King to Lord Melbourne, 16th Aug. 1835. *Melbourne Papers*, p. 309.)

tolerable imputation to an honest Minister who had to rely upon Radical support. Melbourne, the very antithesis of Brougham in frankness, was incapable of posing as a Conservative to his monarch and as a Liberal to his followers and colleagues. Personally the King could not help liking his First Minister; and this enabled Melbourne to keep things going as no other man of his party, not even Lord Grey, could have done. Nevertheless, twice during 1835 matters came to the very verge of rupture.

The King's displeasure with Palmerston, 1835.

Melbourne, who, as we have seen, had vowed he would "have nothing to do with Durham," gladly availed himself of an opportunity of getting him out of the country. The British Embassy at St. Petersburg had been vacant since 1833, owing to Czar Nicholas's peremptory refusal to receive Stratford Canning as ambassador. The very place for Durham, thought Melbourne, and Palmerston agreed; but before submitting his name to the King, would it not be well to sound the Czar? It would never do to give him a second opportunity of affronting the Crown of Great Britain. Palmerston, accordingly, took steps to ascertain whether Lord Durham would be acceptable to the Czar. When this came to King William's knowledge he was furious, vowed that his Ministers were treating him as a cipher, and commanded Melbourne to communicate his strong displeasure to the Foreign Minister. Melbourne wrote and told the King that he had "with great reluctance" discharged the duty imposed upon him, adding boldly that "in performing this act he must by no means be considered as concurring in any censure of a Minister with whom he has entirely agreed, or of any act to which he himself has been a party."[1]

The second incident was still more critical. Sir Charles Grey, having been appointed Special Commissioner to Canada, attended at St. James's Palace to be sworn of the Privy Council. After he had kissed hands, the King addressed him with great energy, bidding him remember that the colony of Canada had been won by the sword, and enjoining him to assert strenuously the prerogatives of the

[1] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 334.

Crown, "of which persons who ought to have known better have dared, even in my presence, to deny the existence."[1] The reference was to Lord Glenelg, Colonial Minister, and it produced a disagreeable impression among those who recognised it. The tone, manner, and place of the rebuke were such as to make it impossible that the Cabinet should let it pass without remonstrance. Accordingly a letter to the King was drawn up, protesting in the plainest terms against such "a censure passed in such a place upon a Minister for opinions expressed to your Majesty in your closet."[2]

The King's displeasure with Glenelg, 1835.

This was early in July; on 9th August Melbourne said at a meeting of the Cabinet that he had long been in doubt whether it was right and becoming to persevere with the government, having the Court, the House of Lords, and the English constituencies against them, and nothing in their favour but an insignificant and precarious majority in the House of Commons, dependent upon the good will of Radicals and Repealers. He declared that a man must have the patience of an ass to stand against such odds.[3] The autumn recess did much to restore his natural equanimity; but, before meeting Parliament in February, a delicate decision upon another matter had to be arrived at.

Melbourne had let Brougham down as gently as possible by the expedient of putting the Great Seal in commission; but that makeshift could not be maintained. By the end of 1835 heavy arrears had accumulated in the Court of Chancery, involving grievous costs upon suitors, for business could not proceed unless all the commissioners were present, and each of these had his own court to attend to. Matters were brought to a point by Sir Edward Sugden, who had

[1] Greville, iii. 272.

[2] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 335. A few days later, on July 11, Melbourne said at a meeting of the Cabinet, "Gentlemen, you may as well know how you stand," and then read a memorandum of a conversation between the King and Lord Gosford the day before. Said the King: "Mind what you are about in Canada. By God! I will never consent to alienate the Crown lands nor to make the Council elective. Mind me, my lord, the Cabinet is not *my* Cabinet; they had better take care, or by God! I will have them impeached." (Lord Broughton's *Recollections*, iii. 146.)

[3] Lord Broughton's *Recollections*, iii. 269; *Edinburgh Review*, April 1871, p. 323.

been Irish Chancellor in Peel's Government, and who now issued a pamphlet entitled *What has become of the Great Seal?* Brougham, therefore, must be dared to do his worst, for Melbourne was as resolute as ever against admitting him to office.

Early in 1834 Brougham had brought forward an equity draftsman, Christopher Pepys, and obtained his appointment as Solicitor-General. When Leach died suddenly in the same year, Pepys succeeded him as Master of the Rolls, and it was this favourite of fortune who was now raised to the woolsack with the title of Lord Cottenham. Sir John Campbell, Attorney-General, wrote in wrath to Melbourne resigning his office. Melbourne, master of suavity and tact, explained that the Government could not spare him from the House of Commons, that it was proposed to bestow a peerage upon Lady Campbell after the precedent set in the case of Lady Mansfield in a similar exigency, and carefully concealed the real reason for passing him over, to wit, the King's strong personal objection to him.[1] Campbell, mollified by the adroit parallel of Mansfield, withdrew his resignation; but what about Brougham? Ah, there indeed was a pathetic figure. No friendly hand was interposed to soften the blow. Remote in his grey tower among the Westmorland fells, he read the announcement in the London papers that the humble object of his patronage had been exalted to that high office to which he had never allowed himself to doubt that, sooner or later, he would be recalled. Everybody expected his vengeful appearance on the public scene; but, to the relief of Ministers, he remained in the north, nursing his ire, and also his health, which was grievously broken at this time.

Sir Christopher Pepys becomes Lord Chancellor, Jan. 1836.

As for Lord Cottenham, he surprised most of his acquaintance by rising to the full dignity of his eminence. Lord Holland declared that they had exchanged the rarest bundle of rockets for a mortar that went off seldom, but never missed fire. When the Irish Chancellor, Lord Plunket, asked Melbourne how he got on with Cottenham

[1] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 303 note. Lady Campbell became Baroness Stratheden, and her husband was created Lord Campbell in 1841.

—"Oh, capitally," said he; "I'm like a man who has broken for good with a termagant mistress, and married the best of cooks."[1]

By the time Ministers met Parliament on 4th February, Stanley and Graham had formally seceded from the Whig party, though Stanley's father, Lord Derby, still kept his accustomed place behind Ministers in the other House.[2] The first measure of importance was one to reform Irish corporations on lines similar to those applied to English ones. No question that the need for reform was as pressing in one country as the other, but the two cases were not on all-fours. English corporations had been packed and corrupted in the interest of one or other political party; in Ireland the object had been to maintain Protestant ascendancy. Notwithstanding the immense numerical preponderance of Roman Catholics in Ireland, in only one town council—that of Tuam—had they a majority of votes. In Dublin not a single Roman Catholic had a seat on the Common Council. The first effect of throwing open the municipal franchise would be the wholesale ejection of Protestants, and Peel, warmly as he had supported the English Bill, declined to have any hand in turning Irish corporations into mere cockpits of sectarian faction.[3] To exchange an old wrong for a new one was not his notion of reform; he proposed the total abolition of elective corporations in Ireland, and the appointment by the Crown of magistrates and commissioners to govern every borough. The Bill was altered to this effect by the Lords. Russell went a long way to meet the Opposition, consenting to abolish all municipal corporations except those of the twelve largest towns; but to this the Lords would not agree, and the Bill was dropped. To understand the strong objection offered by Conservative Reformers[4] to the

Secession of Stanley and his party from the Whigs, July 1835.

Irish Corporations Bill, 1835.

[1] Torrens's *Melbourne*, ii. 174.

[2] Greville (iii. 272) says Stanley and Graham crossed the House on 1st July 1835, but Torrens (*Melbourne*, ii. 178) states that they took their seats in opposition for the first time at the opening of the session of 1835.

[3] Peel to Wellington, 10th Feb. 1836 (*Peel Letters*, ii. 323).

[4] A term applied to the followers of Stanley by Sir J. Graham, 21st Nov. 1836 (*Peel Letters*, ii. 329).

maintenance of Irish corporations, the vehement speeches of O'Connell, Smith O'Brien, and other Irish members must be read. Repeal of the Union was the burden of their cry, and they only gave their support to any measure affecting Ireland in proportion as it tended to that object.

Next came a Bill to settle the Irish tithe question, which should have had an easy passage, seeing that both parties were committed to its main principle, namely, conversion and commutation; but once again the Government insisted upon the appropriation clauses, which really had nothing to do with the relief of the tithe-payer. These clauses only commanded a majority of twenty-six votes in the House of Commons; the House of Lords cut them out, the Commons refused to agree, and thus, for the third time, redress of this crying grievance was postponed. Greatly as this was to be deplored, the Conservatives, regarding the right of property as part of the bedrock of civil government, perceived in the proposed invasion of the Church's patrimony the admission of a principle which might be applied to any institution, corporation, or class of individuals not strong enough to defend itself. The logical weakness of the Conservative position lay in the historical fact that so large a proportion of the revenues of English landowners had descended to them from those lay impropriators among whom the monarch had distributed the estates confiscated from the Church at the dissolution of the monasteries. The result appeared to falsify the old adage—

Irish Tithes Bill, 1836.

De male quæsitis vix gaudet tertius hœres.

It was indeed an old story. To go back to the sixteenth century for precedent would involve research into a higher antiquity to justify the original titles under which the Church of Rome had acquired its lands. Not until 1838, when Ministers abandoned the appropriation clauses, did they succeed in carrying a wisely conciliatory measure for the settlement of Irish tithes.

The Government was more successful in dealing with English tithes. Under the system in force, entitling the tithe-owner to a tenth of all crops and of the increase

of live stock, constant friction and disputes arose in the process of collection, complicated as it was by the varieties of great or small tithe, prædial, mixed, general, and extraordinary tithe, resulting in much discouragement to improvement in agriculture. In 1833, and again in 1834, Lord Althorp had introduced Bills for permissive commutation; but these had been crowded out, and a third attempt made by Peel in 1835 came to an end with his Ministry. Meanwhile commutation had been effected in many parishes by means of private Acts of Parliament, which, being very expensive, afforded evidence of a general desire for a satisfactory settlement, requiring only time and tact to provide. Russell found both of these requisite, and succeeded in passing a Bill which went a step further than its predecessors. Provision was made therein for voluntary composition, failing which commutation was to be compulsory, calculated by a central commission on the average price of cereals during seven preceding years. The value of tithes commuted to rent charge under this Act was £4,053,985, whereof £962,289 was payable to lay impropriators, and £678,987 to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; the balance, £2,412,708 going to parochial incumbents.[1]

English Tithe Commutation Act, 1836.

One other beneficent Act remains to be recorded to the credit of this Parliament. The Marriage Act of 1753 had deprived all Nonconformists, except Quakers and Jews, of the right they had previously enjoyed of celebrating their marriages in their own places of worship. By this Act, all marriages, save those of members of the aforesaid sects, were declared illegal unless performed by a clergyman of the Church of England. In 1753 dissenters were but a weak minority in the land, but eighty years of evangelical industry had matured the seed sown by Wesley into a vast crop, especially among the newly enfranchised middle class; and albeit Methodism had been sundered into many sects (the common fate of all churches without an autocratic central

Marriage and Registration Acts, 1836.

[1] By the Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Act of 1891, process through county courts was substituted for distress, and the landowner, instead of the tenant, was made liable for payment of tithe.

authority), all alike resented the law which compelled men and women to bow down in what was to them as the House of Baal, before they could perform the most momentous act of their lives. Even more galling was the yoke upon Unitarians, who repudiated belief in the Trinity, yet were compelled to invoke it explicitly in the English marriage service.

In 1819 and again in 1822 the House of Commons had rejected William Smith's proposal to exempt Unitarians from an obligation so hateful to them; but in 1823 it passed Lord Lansdowne's Bill to allow Dissenters freedom to celebrate marriages in their own way; but this measure was defeated in the Lords through the vehemence of Eldon. In 1827 a Bill authorising civil marriages passed through the Lower Chamber; this also met its doom in "another place," my lords taking their cue in doctrinal matters from the bench of bishops. In 1834 Lord John Russell proposed to license dissenting chapels for marriages; but Dissenters, conscious of increased political power, objected to the implied obligation to celebrate marriage only in places of worship and to the compulsory proclamation of banns in the parish church, so the Bill was dropped. Peel's Bill of 1835 went far further, legalising marriages by civil contract, but it fell with his Ministry. It remained for Russell to carry out the intention of the Conservative Government. His Marriage Act of 1836 gave full liberty to Nonconformists to be married either in church or chapel, or, if preferred, in neither, but before a registrar.[1]

With each succeeding session of Parliament the King's relations with his Ministers had grown worse. He had not only ceased to invite them to his table, but his language

[1] Those who experienced the amiable courtesy of the late Sir Spencer Walpole may well be surprised at the acrimony of his invective in political difference. He describes the authority vested by law in the Church as sole dispenser of the sacred rite of marriage as "the privilege of a selfish class"; and when a bishop expressed conscientious scruples about divesting marriage (which in the Church of Rome is a sacrament) of its religious character, he dismisses them as "the objection of an intolerant prelate." Tolerance surely implies respect even for opinions which one does not share. However cordially one may endorse Bishop Hall's proposition—that a book should be composed *De paucitate credendorum*—nothing is lost by judging tenderly those who retain the faith bequeathed by generations of good men.

and demeanour to them as individuals often gave them the impression that he was trying to force them to resign one by one. Only respect for the King's advanced age, and the apprehension lest his mind should become unhinged as his father's had done, enabled Melbourne and his colleagues to persevere with their thankless task.

Last days of William IV., 1837.

"Is not the probable resignation of the Government the great question of the day? . . . Their resignation is a great misfortune, but I cannot doubt that it will take place." [1]

Thus wrote Wellington to Peel on 23rd March; but the "great misfortune" was averted by an event now casting its shadow before. Parliament had been opened on 31st January by commission, the King remaining in Brighton in overt token of his displeasure with the party in power. He continued to correspond voluminously with Melbourne, held councils from time to time, but was unable to attend a ball given at St. James's on 25th May in honour of his niece, Princess Alexandrina Victoria, who completed her eighteenth year on that day and attained her majority. The King had often and forcibly expressed a wish that he might live to see that day, that so the evils of a regency might be avoided.

His last public appearance was at a Council which he summoned at Windsor on 30th May. After that he rapidly grew worse. On 18th June the Archbishop of Canterbury administered to him the sacrament. "This is the 18th of June," said the old Sailor King; "I should like to live to see the sun of Waterloo set." The wish was fulfilled, but before dawn on the 20th King William had drawn his last breath. He was in his seventy-second year.

Custom and convention prescribed that the leader in each House of Parliament should pronounce eulogy upon the departed monarch in terms appropriate only to characters of singular excellence and splendour. In truth, all that could honestly be said about King William's reign was that it might very easily have been worse. It is as easy to dwell upon his errors of judgment as it is to forget

[1] *Peel Letters*, ii. 342.

that he was called to conform to an order of rule altered from all that his predecessors had experienced, and from the traditions of his German ancestors. And that, too, at a period of life when the mind does not readily accept novel principles of conduct. Judge him the more leniently by reason of his training as a sailor. A King's ship is not, nor can she ever be, a school of constitutional government; the only rule of safety there is naked autocracy.

Constitutional writers have denounced William IV. for exerting his prerogative as a check upon progress at a time of seething change. So may the application of the drag disturb the ease of travellers in a coach, while contributing to their safety by moderating the pace. Carrying this well-worn metaphor a little further, we may reflect with gratitude that the reins were in such skilled and patient hands as Grey's first and then Melbourne's.

King William's private life appears almost radiant beside the murky record of his elder brother. True that he came to the throne with ten illegitimate children to his score; but the natural affections of ordinary mortals are not hampered by a Royal Marriage Act. He was, at least, kind and constant to the mistress of his youth, Mrs. Jordan, and a tender father to his numerous offspring by her. His tastes were simple to the verge of homeliness; disliking display, his only extravagance was liberal and rather indiscriminate benevolence. Yet he never won a place in the affections of his people, the majority showing but little concern when he was known to be dying.[1]

Severance of the crowns of Great Britain and Hanover, June 1837.

By King William's demise his subjects were freed from a double embarrassment, namely, the union of the crowns of Great Britain and Hanover, and the presence of the King's brother, Ernest Duke of Cumberland. Ever since 1714, when the Elector of Lüneberg (as Hanover was then called) became George I. of England, his continental

[1] Greville, iii. 403. Those who were in London or any other populous place in the realm during January 1901, when Queen Victoria was on her deathbed at Windsor, may remember how different was the feeling then—how eager was the anxiety of all sorts and conditions of men and women, even of those whose station in life was most distant from the throne, to hear the latest bulletins.

realm had been a perpetual menace to peace. It involved George II. in the Seven Years' War; it surrendered to Napoleon in 1803; it received recognition as a kingdom at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and who may declare in what complications Great Britain might have been involved in 1866, when Hanover was forcibly annexed to Prussia, had Queen Victoria been a continental monarch? Happily the two crowns were disunited in 1837 by the action of the Salic law preventing a woman succeeding to the kingdom of Hanover. Still more happily, that law was no part of the British constitution, else had the Duke of Cumberland succeeded his brother on the throne of England, with such results as those may divine who have followed the course of his tyrannical rule in Hanover, to which he did succeed.

The Conservative leaders, especially, rejoiced at Cumberland's removal to a separate sphere, for he had continually exerted himself to resist the moderate Tories and to force on a crisis between the two Chambers of Legislature.[1] Moreover, his private reputation, notoriously worse than any other of George III.'s sons, was damaging to the political party with which he ostentatiously identified himself.

Away with you, then, to Hanover, Duke Cumberland, where you have the chance of turning a new leaf, and praised be Heaven for bringing the sceptre of this realm into the hand of a maiden Princess, and for placing by her side so wise a counsellor as Viscount Melbourne!

Let us give a moment's contemplation to this new star which has risen so quietly in a firmament where clouds of recent storm and distrust still linger so darkly. When George IV.'s only daughter, Princess Charlotte, died in 1817, his married brothers, the Dukes of York and Cumberland, had no legitimate offspring. The succession to the throne being thus open, the bachelor brothers, Dukes of Clarence, Kent,

Accession of Queen Victoria, 20th June 1837.

[1] "There is no person who feels more than I do the inconvenience of the Duke of Cumberland. I feel it every day and all day. . . . His amusement is mischief, preparing for it, hearing parties about each other, and talking of it afterwards. But I never could discover that he felt any real interest in any question, or entertained any serious opinion." (Wellington to Peel, 11th February 1836.)

and Cambridge, hastened to provide themselves with wives, and were all three married during the year 1818. The elder of the three, who succeeded as William IV., had no children by his marriage with Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen. The Duke of Kent married Her Serene Highness Victoria Mary Louisa, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfield and widow of the Prince of Leiningen.[1] A daughter was born to them on 24th May 1819, whose birth the Duke did not long survive, for he died on 23rd January 1820, just a week before his father, George III.

It was upon the child of this marriage that Archbishop Howley of Canterbury and the Marquess of Conyngham, Lord Chamberlain, waited in Kensington Palace, at five o'clock in the morning of 20th June 1837, to summon her to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland. They had driven at speed from Windsor through the summer dawn and morning. She came before them "in a loose white night-gown and shawl, her night-cap thrown off, and her hair falling on her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified." What inkling could they have, these high dignitaries of Church and State, that they were performing an act as momentous to their country as did the messenger of Saul when they summoned David from the sheepcote, from following the sheep? What warrant was there that this slender girl would prove more than her predecessors on the throne—a valuable counter in the game of party politics? David, at all events, had earned fame by killing a lion and a bear single-handed; but of Princess Alexandrina Victoria less was known than of any other member of the royal house—less, positively, than of almost any other young woman of high rank in London.[2]

At eleven o'clock the young Queen received the Privy

[1] For an extraordinary conversation with the Duke of Kent previous to this marriage, see *Creevey*, i. 267–271.

[2] "What renders speculation so easy and events so uncertain is the absolute ignorance of everybody, without exception, of the character, disposition, and capacity of the Princess. She has been kept in such jealous seclusion by her mother (never having slept out of her bedroom, nor been alone with anybody but herself and the Baroness Lehzen), that not one of her acquaintance, not even the Duchess of Northumberland, her governess, has any idea what she is or what she promises to be." (Greville, iii. 406.)

Council, read her speech in clear, calm accents, and took the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland. Then, for the first time, it was known what was to be the title of the new monarch. In signing the aforesaid oath she did not use her full name; she simply wrote VICTORIA, a name that was to endure so long and gather to itself such lustre as to dispel the ominous cloud which had stooped so low over the throne of the Georges.[1]

William IV. detested his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Kent, and publicly insulted her at a State banquet at Windsor in 1836.[2] He deeply resented the seclusion in which Princess Victoria was brought up, desiring that she should reside regularly at Court and be publicly recognised as his heir. The Duchess was not a wise woman, far from it; her indiscretions were the gossip of the town; but whatever may have been the laxity of her own conduct, she neglected no precaution to isolate her daughter from evil influences. The Princess's childhood, cheerless and comparatively friendless, was brightened by the frequent intercourse with her mother's brother Leopold, who, before he became King of the Belgians in 1831, lived constantly at Claremont, and devoted more tender care to his niece than many a father bestows upon his daughters. His influence was all for good, and did much to prepare a temperament naturally wilful and impatient for the high station which Victoria was destined to fill.

All eyewitnesses of the young Queen's behaviour during the ceremonies consequent upon her accession were unanimous in her praise; letters and memoirs of that period teem with enthusiastic approval. Party politicians, indeed,

[1] Probably not one in ten thousand of Queen Victoria's subjects ever knew her full baptismal name. Her father named her Alexandrina in compliment to the Empress of Russia, intending that her second name should be Georgiana. But the Prince Regent, who was not on cordial terms with the Duke of Kent, vowed that he would never consent to the name Georgiana being second to any other, so the infant was called Victoria after her mother, unconsciously prophetic, as it turned out, of the character of her reign.

At the accession of our present King, 22nd January 1901, much speculation prevailed among the Privy Council assembled in St. James's Palace as to the name which his Majesty would choose to bear upon the throne. All doubts were settled by the first words of his speech—"I have chosen to be called Edward."

[2] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, i. 19.

were not so unanimous, Liberals being elated by the change and Conservatives correspondingly depressed, for the Duke of Kent had been a strong Whig; Queen Victoria had been brought up under Whig influence, and with parties so nearly balanced in the House of Commons, it seemed only to require the countenance of the monarch to turn the scale. The Crown had not yet been raised above the turmoil of party strife, and it had been the recognised practice for royal princes to take an active part in Parliament upon the most controversial subjects. Court influence, paramount in the reign of George III., hardly less so in that of George IV., had been wielded as a weapon of offence by William IV., and, in all three reigns, had been almost invariably directed against the Whigs or popular party.

Dissolution of Parliament, July 1837.

In the general election following upon the dissolution in July, Liberal candidates made much capital out of the Queen's political inclination. Some quick-witted Tory inscribed a window-pane in a Huddersfield tavern with the following epigram:—

> "'The Queen is with us!' Whigs insulting say,
> 'For when *she found us in*, she let us stay.'
> It may be so; but give me leave to doubt
> How long she'll keep you when *she finds you out!*" [1]

The elections made little change in the relative strength of parties, conspicuous losses on one side being balanced by those on the other. *Exeunt* the recent Conservative recruit, Sir James Graham, and Sir George Murray, Wellington's old Quartermaster-General in the Peninsula and former Colonial Secretary; while Radicals bemoaned the defeat of Joseph Hume [2] and the uncompromising Roebuck. No signs, as yet, of the fulfilment of Peel's doleful forecast in his Tamworth manifesto of the Constitution being "trampled under the hoof of a ruthless democracy." The Whigs still reckoned on a majority of thirty votes in the House of Commons, but the real situation was pretty fairly described in the *Annual Register* as follows: "Of power, in a political sense, Ministers had none; they could carry no measure of any kind but by sufferance of Sir Robert Peel." One of

[1] *Annual Register*, 1837, p. 239.

[2] O'Connell promptly provided Hume with a seat in Kilkenny.



Queen Victoria's First Council.

after the painting by Sir. David Wilkie

LOUISE HEWARD ARCHGTE 1910

the most remarkable figures in the new House, when it met on 20th November, was thus described by an eyewitness:—

"A bottle-green frock-coat and a waistcoat of white of the Dick Swiveller pattern, the front of which exhibited a network of glittering chains; large fancy-pattern pantaloons and a black tie, above which no shirt collar was visible, completed the outward man. A countenance lividly pale, set out by a pair of intensely black eyes and a broad, but not very high, forehead, overhung by clustering ringlets of coal-black hair, which, combed away from the right temple, fell in bunches of well-oiled ringlets over his left cheek."

This was Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, son of a well-known man of letters, newly returned for Maidstone. The House of Commons is not exacting in the matter of attire, and habitually indulgent in its reception of maiden speeches, but Disraeli proved too much for its equanimity. Every turgid passage, each far-fetched metaphor, brought down a roar of laughter, till at last the orator sat down after uttering the famous prophecy: "I am not surprised at the reception I have experienced. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. The time will come when you *shall* hear me!"

First appearance of Benjamin Disraeli, 7th Dec. 1837.

Lord Melbourne owes his recognition as one of the great Ministers of England to the admirable manner in which he acted as confidential counsellor to the young Queen, who, applying herself with zeal and quick intelligence to her high functions, could not have entrusted herself to better guidance than his. Her Majesty learnt to rely in later years upon the advice of Sir Robert Peel, who was undoubtedly the greater statesman, but who must have proved sadly defective in the tact and *savoir-faire* which made Melbourne such an ideal Mentor for a youthful and eager Sovereign. Scarcely, indeed, could greater contrast be imagined between the outward characteristics of two English gentlemen of high reputation than existed between the leaders of Government and Opposition at this time—Peel, anxious and preoccupied in demeanour, cold and tactless in address, devoid of humour in conversation [1]—Melbourne, "all good

Queen Victoria and Lord Melbourne, 1837.

[1] Wellington is reported to have felt the social difficulty in his Ministry of 1829. "How are we to get on with the thing? I have no small talk and

nature and gaiety," masking unsparing industry and excellent business capacity under an affectation of indolence and *poco curante*. If Melbourne had to receive a deputation, very likely he spent hours in getting up the subject of discussion, yet during the interview he would loll on a sofa, dandle a cushion, or even blow a feather about the room, to the despair of those who wished to engage his attention and could not believe that his attention was fixed upon all that was said. Bishop Wilberforce left it on record that Dr. Copeland told him that Melbourne used to shut himself up in his bedroom to work with his secretaries, so that his servants might say to undesirable visitors, "My lord has not yet left his bedroom."[2]

In one respect the Prime Minister had to put severe restraint upon himself in his altered relations with the throne. Being far from sharing Bob Acres's opinion that "damns had had their day," his conversation was habitually seasoned and his arguments enforced with a profusion of expletive.[3] He is reported to have expressed admiration for the Order of the Garter, "because there was no damned merit connected with it;" but he did not care for it enough to obtain it for himself. His late master had sworn like any trooper, and bad language was current in the highest society, but all that had to be changed now.

In all our history there are few pictures whereon it is so agreeable to gaze as that of the girl Queen and her

Peel has no manners." Cobden, speaking at a public meeting in December 1845, said: "I have no reason, and I think you will all admit it, to feel any great respect for Sir Robert Peel. He is the only man in the House of Commons that I can never speak a word to in private without forfeiting my own respect and the respect of all those men who sit round me." Yet a few weeks later Peel split his party irrevocably by adopting Cobden's policy.

[1] *Creevey*, ii. 313.

[2] "Although, as old Talleyrand observed, Melbourne may be *trop camarade* for a Prime Minister in some things, yet it is this very familiar, unguarded manner, when it is backed by perfect integrity and quite sufficient talent, that makes him perfectly invaluable and invulnerable" (*Creevey*, ii. 309).

[3] Lord Ossington used to describe an interview which took place when he, as Mr. Denison, wished to consult Melbourne about some points in the Poor Law Bill. The Prime Minister was just starting for a ride, and referred Denison to his brother George Lamb. "I have been with him," said Denison, "but he damned me and damned the Bill and damned the paupers." —"Well, damn it! what more *could* he do?" quoth Melbourne, and the interview closed.

aged Minister. Trained as Victoria had been in a high Whig school, she gratefully accepted his guidance in affairs of State, yielding him her confidence in such matters without reserve; and so light was Melbourne's hand upon the rein, so kindly and attractive was his nature, that their intercourse insensibly warmed into mutual affection. Without for one moment forgetting their relation as Sovereign and subject, the Queen sought her Minister's advice upon many things other than constitutional questions, consulting him about books,[1] playing chess with him on winter evenings, and bestowing such care upon his health as might an anxious daughter—"he eats too much, and I often tell him so."[2]

It was inevitable that jealousy should be kindled by Melbourne's constant presence at Court. Downing Street, not Windsor Castle, was the proper abode of the Prime Minister, murmured Tapers and Tadpoles. On the whole, however, gossips were good-natured. "I hope you are amused," wrote Lady Grey to Creevey, "at the report of Lord Melbourne being likely to marry the Queen. For my part I have no objection."[3]

No mere puppet was this Queen, however, even in her favourite Melbourne's hands; peremptory enough when those about her tried to dissuade her from her purpose. She had not been a month on the throne before she expressed her intention of appearing at a review on horseback. Baron Stockmar told her that it would be considered indelicate to do so unaccompanied by any lady. Wellington ridiculed the proposal. "As to the soldiers, I know *them;* they won't care about it one sixpence. It is a childish fancy, because she has read of Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury Fort; but *then* there was threat of foreign invasion, which was an occasion calling for display; what occasion is there now?"[4]

Much, your Grace, as you will live to acknowledge, for this was the first step in a long series of simple acts which have done more to broaden the foundation of monarchy than all the prerogative inherited from a long line of Sovereigns.

[1] *Creevey*, ii. 325.
[2] Greville, iv. 22.
[3] *Creevey*, ii. 307.
[4] *Salisbury MSS.*, 1837.

CHAPTER V

The affairs of Canada—Grievances of the French Canadians—Grievances of the British Canadians—Rebellion in Lower Canada—Revolt in Upper Canada—Remonstrance of Melbourne's colleagues—Lord Durham appointed High Commissioner—Brougham attacks the Government—Attitude of the Opposition towards Radical vote of censure—Lord Durham's Canadian administration—Brougham's vengeance upon Durham—Durham's indiscretion—His scheme for governing Canada—Mr. Poulett-Thomson appointed High Commissioner—Union of Upper and Lower Canada—The Dominion of Canada constituted.

IF the general election did not make the position of the Government worse in the House of Commons, assuredly it did nothing to better it. Radicals were losing all patience with a Premier who met nearly every proposal for fresh legislation with an unsympathetic "Why can't ye let it alone?" and who positively refused to entertain any scheme for further electoral reform. "Those behind cried forward, and those in front cried back," which had the usual exasperating effect upon the former. True, a few Radicals had lost their seats, but the balance was redressed by a corresponding increase in Irish Repealers, without whose support, distasteful as it was to Melbourne, the Government could not stand.

Uneasy position of the Government, 1838.

In the House of Lords, Brougham, realising at last that he had indeed been cut adrift, abandoned the patronising attitude he had maintained in the last Parliament towards his old colleagues, and began to wreak vengeance upon the Prime Minister who had dared to set him aside. Inclining at first to put himself at the head of the Radicals, in his first onslaught upon Ministers he fought shoulder to shoulder with that incorrigible Tory Lyndhurst.

The occasion arose out of a crisis in colonial affairs. When the region of Canada, some 1400 miles in length and 200 to 400 miles in breadth, was ceded by France to Great Britain in 1763, it contained about 65,000 French inhabitants settled in its eastern area. It remained practically a French community,

The affairs of Canada, 1837–41.

but with guarantee for free exercise of the religion of Rome and for equal civil and commercial rights with British colonists. French laws and customs were confirmed, including the feudal rights and immunities of seignories; only in criminal law was English trial by jury substituted for French procedure. Throughout the conflict which ended in the loss to the British Crown of the United States of America, the French Canadians remained perfectly loyal to King George. On the declaration of independence by the revolted provinces in 1776, large numbers of loyalist refugees flocked into the colony, settling chiefly in Upper or Western Canada, which became an almost exclusively British community. By this time, also, a considerable stream of immigration had set in from the mother-country, especially from the Highlands of Scotland. Upper and Lower Canada became, in effect, two distinct settlements, differing in race, in creed, and in language. The distinction was formally recognised by Parliament in 1791, when each region was given a separate constitution of a somewhat complex nature. At this time the population of Lower or French Canada had risen to about 130,000 souls, that of Upper or British Canada to 50,000, and the British inhabitants of Lower Canada were increasing faster than the French. The constitution conferred by Pitt's Government consisted of an elective House of Assembly, a Legislative Council or Upper Chamber nominated by the Crown, and a Governor, supported by a third body, viz. an Executive Council, corresponding to a Cabinet, also appointed by the Crown. This elaborate machinery worked smoothly enough until after the war between Great Britain and the United States in 1812–14, during which the colonists again remained true to the flag. But with the return of peace they began to realise how little control their constitution enabled them to exert upon their own affairs. The people of Lower Canada, cherishing the tradition of France under *l'ancien régime*, had hitherto displayed little ardour for the blessings of self-government. Their mode of life was tranquil, uneventful, contented, and might have so continued indefinitely, but for restless British immigrants who arrived in ever-increasing number, bringing with them novel ways and

ideas, not to be reconciled with the laws and feudal institutions which it was the pride of the intensely conservative French Canadians to have maintained long after the fires of revolution had consumed them in the land of their origin. These new-comers, moreover, so terribly energetic, threatened to alter the whole character of the country by acquiring huge tracts of unsettled lands, a prospect as little to the liking of the French community as, at the close of the century, the intrusion of British exploiters proved to the pastoral Dutch Boers of the Transvaal. And just as the Boers sought at first to preserve by constitutional means a condition of things which they cherished, so the French Canadians betook themselves to exercising the franchise, hitherto neglected, and being still in a great majority, filled the House of Assembly with their own people. The Governor retaliated by packing the Legislative Council with British settlers, whereby, backed by his Executive Council, he exercised practically autocratic rule.

Grievances of the French Canadians.

Despite the racial animosity kindled by these proceedings, matters might have adjusted themselves in time by the steady influx of British immigrants equalising or swamping the French vote, but for the existence of financial grievances affecting the interests of both races. The revenue of the colony was derived from two main sources, namely, duties imposed by the Imperial Parliament by an Act of 1774, and duties imposed by the Provincial Legislature and placed under its control by an Act of 1788. Besides these, there was the revenue derived from one seventh of the entire territory of Canada which had been reserved to the Crown, and another seventh applied to the support of the Church of England in both colonies. The House of Assembly claimed the right to administer not only the revenue derived from duties imposed subsequently to 1788, but also the duties in force at that date, as well as the proceeds of the sale of Crown lands. In 1831 the justice of this claim was so far recognised by Parliament that it conceded to the Provincial Legislature full control of the revenue derived from duties. This did not satisfy the colonists. The House of Assembly insisted on its right to the revenue from Crown

lands; the Legislative Council, composed entirely of British nominees of the Crown, opposed the demand, so the French party, led by Louis Joseph Papineau, began to agitate for an elective Legislative Council. To grant this demand would have been to hand the whole of Lower Canada over to Papineau and his party, whose aim avowedly was nothing short of complete independence and autonomy. To enforce their demand the House of Assembly took the constitutional course of refusing supplies. For five years, 1832 to 1837, no money was voted for the public service, the arrears of salary due to colonial officials at the close of that period amounting to £142,160.

Grievances of Upper Canada.

The discontent of the British community in Upper Canada arose from grievances of another kind. Here both Chambers of the Legislature claimed that self-government should be made a reality by making the Executive Council responsible to them, as the only means of limiting the arbitrary power of the Governor. Also, remedy was sought against the action of the Lower Canadian government, which, taking advantage of the fact that the only communication between Upper Canada and the sea lay through Lower Canada, imposed duties and restrictions upon imports and exports to the detriment of the sister colony.

Canada was a long way from England in the 'thirties, and Grey's Cabinet had plenty on their hands nearer home during and after the Reform agitation. Still, it cannot be thought that Lord Glenelg would not have found some means of averting the mischief brewing on the banks of the St. Lawrence, but for the inflexible resolve of King William to refuse all concessions.[1] Lord Aberdeen, succeeding Glenelg at the Colonial Office in 1834, did not overlook the urgency of Canadian affairs, and decided to send out a Commissioner to arbitrate. First he invited Lord Canterbury to undertake the task, and when he declined it, Stratford Canning.[2] Neither would Canning

[1] See the incident with Sir Charles Grey (pp. 58, 59, *supra*), and especially the King's letter to Melbourne, 7th June 1836 (*Melbourne Papers*, p. 349).

[2] Greville's comment upon this was that "for a situation requiring an agent of strong understanding and good temper, they successively selected a foolish man of good temper and a clever man of bad" (iii. 234).

touch it, so he fell back on Lord Amherst. Next the Whigs, returning to office, would not entrust so nettlesome a constitutional question in Tory hands. They proposed to give Amherst two colleagues of their own colour, whereupon my lord threw up the appointment. Finally the Governors of both the Canadas were recalled; Lord Gosford was sent out as Governor of Lower Canada, and Major Francis Head exchanged the peaceful functions of Assistant Poor Law Commissioner for those of Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada,[1] Sir Charles Grey, formerly Chief-Justice of Bengal, and Sir George Gipps, a Peninsular martinet, being sent out as joint-commissioners.

Gosford discreetly withheld from the French House of Assembly the instructions he had received from his Government, which, albeit considerably modified from the uncompromising terms of the King's declaration, indicated pretty clearly something stronger than disinclination to entertain the prayer of the colony.[2] Head was not so discreet. He published his own instructions, together with extracts from those to Lord Gosford; the news soon spread to Lower Canada, nullifying Gosford's diplomacy.

In Upper Canada, Head had the Legislative Council as well as the House of Assembly against him. The latter he dissolved, and succeeded in obtaining one more to his mind. From Lower Canada an address to the Crown was forwarded by the House of Assembly, representing in perfectly proper terms that to prohibit free discussion upon the question of an elective Legislative Chamber was an infringement of constitutional liberty, and that the Secretary of State had no power "to limit the subjects which are to engage the attention of this House." Pending a reply from Whitehall, six months' supplies were voted to the Governor.

Rebellion in Lower Canada, Nov. 1837.

The agitation went on all the same. Papineau, besides being Speaker of the House of Assembly, was a Militia officer, and held frequent meetings where Canadians were openly encouraged to sedition by references to the successful revolt

[1] Major, afterwards Sir Francis, Head had fought at Waterloo.

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1836, vol. xxxix. p. 13.

of the American States. Freedom of speech not being so liberally interpreted in those days as in this more democratic age, Gosford deprived Papineau and others of their commissions, and issued warrants for the arrest of several members of the House of Assembly on a charge of high treason. The execution of these warrants caused a riot, which quickly kindled into open rebellion. There was some savage fighting and a good deal of bloodshed,[1] but, after the first surprise, the Governor managed to quell the rising with the regular troops under Sir John Colborne.[2] Papineau, content with having fired the train of rebellion, awaited the result at a safe distance in New York. Not, however, before the leaven of revolt had spread to Upper Canada, where M'Kenzie, originally a Scots pedlar lad, now proprietor of a Toronto newspaper, put himself at the head of the malcontents. Governor Head adopted the strangest means ever known to meet the rising. Confident in the loyalty of his colony, he sent every regular soldier away to Lord Gosford's assistance in Lower Canada, and committed 6000 stand of arms, without any military guard whatever, to the care of the Mayor of Toronto; he made no arrests of disaffected persons; he appealed to all loyal subjects to support the flag, and he relied on the Militia for such force as might be required. This bold policy was completely successful; American citizens who came to assist the rebels were kept at bay by shopkeepers of Toronto and backwoodsmen from Lake Champlain, and the affair fizzled out. Head received small thanks for his courage and promptitude from the Home Government—was bidden, indeed, to reflect what might have been the result if, having sent away the regular troops, his appeal to the loyalists had met with a different response. He was directed to reinstate certain officials whom he had removed from office as rebels; rather than do that he resigned his governorship and returned to England. When he waited upon Lord Melbourne and asked to be heard in his own defence, the Prime Minister

Revolt in Upper Canada, Dec. 1837.

[1] *Annual Register*, 1838, pp. 9–12.
[2] Created Lord Seaton in 1839.

waived him off with—"But you are such a damned odd fellow, Sir Francis!"[1]

Retrospective censure, to which historians too readily incline, should always be carefully weighed before delivery; but in this case it was perfectly plain to some of the Cabinet that Melbourne and his Colonial Secretary had so culpably paltered with Canadian affairs as to be largely responsible for the insurrection. Lord Howick was deputed to make this known to the Prime Minister, and to urge him to place the administration of the colonies in stronger hands than Glenelg's. This he declined to do, for reasons which do not appear, so Howick wrote still more forcibly on 29th December:—

Remonstrance of Melbourne's colleagues, Dec. 1837.

"This remedy for the evil I pointed out being impracticable, the only one which remains is that you should yourself assume the management of Canadian business. . . . You will excuse my saying that, in my opinion, your ought much sooner to have given your serious attention to the affairs of this colony, in conducting which you must be sensible that hitherto you have given no real assistance to Glenelg. . . . Let me intreat you to rouse yourself from your past inaction. . . . Remember that the continuance of the same weak and undecided policy which has hitherto been pursued will infallibly lead to the disgraceful loss of all our North American colonies after a calamitous struggle, and, too probably, to the still greater misfortune of a general war."[2]

Melbourne was now between two fires from different sections of his own party, for the Radicals were all on the side of the rebels. Joseph Hume espoused their cause in the House of Commons; Roebuck, being without a seat at this time, appeared as their agent at the bar of each House to protest against a Bill introduced by Lord John Russell to suspend the constitution of Lower Canada and to send out a High Commissioner with plenary powers to settle the affairs of both colonies.[3]

[1] Head afterwards published for his own justification *A Narrative of Recent Events in Canada*, traversing many statements in Lord Durham's report. The tone of the book was indiscreet, but Head's cause is warmly espoused in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxiii. Compare also *Annual Register*, 1838, pp. 236–252.

[2] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 423.

[3] It was in debate upon the Canadian question at this time that the Duke of Wellington uttered the memorable aphorism that "A great country can have no such thing as a little war."

Who was that Commissioner to be? Ministers were not so strong in Parliament as to be able to spare one of their own number; neither was their party remarkable for successful administrators; but circumstances had thrown once more upon Melbourne's hands that *enfant terrible*, Durham, who had just resigned his embassy in St. Petersburg—Durham, whom he had declared to Lord Grey to be one of those Radicals, "with whom I must regard our difference as no less decided, and ought to be as strongly marked, as with the Tories"[1]—Durham, with whom he had vowed to have nothing to do.[2] Envious, resentful, intensely irascible, and immeasurably ambitious, Durham's return to England boded as much disquiet to his former colleagues as it brought strength to their most dangerous enemies, the Radicals. To Canada, therefore, shall Durham go, whereby we shall not only be delivered from his immediate presence on our flank, but shall win favour from the Radicals for thus exalting their titular leader. Some such considerations as these must have weighed with easy-going Melbourne; better warrant for the appointment there was in Durham's undoubted ability, marred though it was by an unruly temper.[3]

Lord Durham appointed High Commissioner, Jan. 1838.

It was the debate upon appointment that gave Brougham an opening for the onslaught upon his former colleagues referred to at the beginning of this chapter. During three hours he continued pouring upon Ministers a flood of fierce invective, bitter sarcasm, and concentrated contempt. Having castigated them to his heart's content, he left the House, disdaining to hear what might be said in their defence.

Brougham's attack upon the Government, 18th Jan. 1838.

[1] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 241. (To Lord Grey, 1st Feb. 1835.)

[2] Ibid., p. 237.

[3] That Melbourne was quite aware of the risk involved in entrusting him with arbitrary power appears from what he wrote to the Queen *after* Durham's return from Canada. "Lord Durham was raised, one hardly knows how, into something of a factitious importance by his own extreme opinions, by the panegyrics of those who thought he would serve them as an instrument, and by the management of the Press; but any little public reputation which he might once have acquired has been entirely dissipated and destroyed by the continued folly of his conduct in his Canadian government." (*Lord Melbourne to Queen Victoria*, 7th May 1839.)

He made no secret of his eagerness to hound out the Government. He sent a copy of his great speech to Lord Stanley, accompanied by a letter in which he said: "I am in wonderment at the extreme self-denial of your Conservatives. I thought I had opened the door of the closet for them and put the Government in a fire that would destroy them, when the Duke [of Wellington] steps forward and protects them from my battery."[1]

Attitude of the Opposition towards Radical vote of censure, 6th March 1838.

The Conservative leaders would lend themselves to no factious opposition to augment the difficulties of the Queen's Government. They could not, indeed, defend Ministers who had allowed colonial matters to drift into such a grave crisis; so when on 6th March Sir William Molesworth, for the Radicals, moved a vote of censure in the form of an address to the Crown praying for the removal of Glenelg, they flatly declined Hume's overtures for a combination which would infallibly have turned out the Government. "I discourage as far as I can," wrote Peel to Wellington, "not only concert, but all sort of communication with the Radicals upon the subject."[2] Lord Sandon, on behalf of the Opposition, moved an amendment to Molesworth's motion, so ingeniously framed as to repel Radical support, because, while censuring "the ambiguous, dilatory, and irresolute course of her Majesty's Ministers," it expressed determination to aid the Queen in suppressing the rebellion and establishing a sound constitution. This was met by a dexterous counter-stroke. Molesworth was induced to withdraw his motion; in a division upon Sandon's amendment, Government received solid support from the Radicals, and escaped defeat by the narrow majority of twenty-nine.

Lord Durham's brief administration has been pithily and truthfully summarised in a single phrase by Mr. Justin M'Carthy—"He made a country and he marred a career." No dictator so despotic as your ardent democrat when occasion serves. Parliament had invested Lord Durham

[1] *Peel Letters*, ii. 360.

[2] Ibid., 359. The whole of Peel's correspondence at this time deserves attention as showing how scrupulously he and his colleagues abstained from purchasing a party victory by alliance with the Radicals.

with extraordinary powers, but he far exceeded them. He was authorised to make laws with the assent of a Special Council of not less than five members. Sir John Colborne, who had administered the government pending Durham's arrival, had appointed such a council of twenty-one members, of whom eleven were French Canadians. Durham, landing at Quebec on 29th May, dismissed not only Colborne's Special Council, but the Executive Council also on the 31st, appointing in place of the latter five members of his own staff. Colborne, perceiving with dismay that the High Commissioner disdained the assistance of those best acquainted with Canadian conditions, at once wrote home asking to be relieved of his command. On 28th June Lord Durham appointed a Special Council of five, two of whom were his own secretaries, and on that very day obtained their assent to an ordinance containing certain clauses of Rhadamanthine cast. Eight Canadians lying in Montreal gaol had written to the Lord High Commissioner acknowledging "that, in the pursuit of objects dear to the great mass of our population, we took a part that has eventuated in a charge of high treason," and throwing themselves upon his mercy, "that the peace of the country may not be endangered by a trial." These men, it was decreed by the ordinance, should be transported to Bermuda, without trial, for an indefinite period, while Papineau and fifteen others were sentenced to death should they at any time return to their native colony without the Governor's consent. Simultaneously, a proclamation of amnesty was issued for all except the twenty-three persons named in the ordinance.

Lord Durham's administration in Canada, May-Oct. 1838.

On the whole, Durham's edict cannot be held to have erred on the side of severity. Some penalties had to be exacted for rebellion; Canadian juries could not be got to convict rebels, and Durham was too impetuous to await the appointment of a special commission to try them. It was not likely that so high-handed an act would pass unnoticed by Radicals at home. Brougham, vigilant and vindictive, detected and seized the occasion for involving the Government and his ancient enemy Durham in a

common ruin. Masking his purpose behind a Bill which he introduced early in August—a Bill of mild and even beneficent aspect, providing, on the one hand, indemnity to Lord Durham for his unconstitutional acts and protecting him from all legal proceedings in consequence of them, but, on the other hand, annulling the ordinance. He had no difficulty in proving that, whereas Durham's authority was expressly limited to passing such laws as did not alter or annul any act of the Imperial Parliament, he had acted illegally in transporting untried persons and condemning others to death, thereby altering the law of high treason. Melbourne and Glenelg declined to accept Brougham's measure, but they made a poor defence, and the second reading was carried against them by fifty-four to twenty-six. Next day they gave away their whole case and sacrificed their High Commissioner, Melbourne announcing that the Queen had been advised to disallow the ordinance.

Brougham's vengeance upon Durham, Aug. 1838.

Up to this point most persons will judge Durham's irregularities leniently, and sympathise with him in the shabby support accorded to him by those who had sent him out as dictator; but there can be no palliation for the course into which his unruly temper now drove him. Before hearing officially from Glenelg that the ordinance had been annulled, Durham had the mortification of reading in an American journal a report of the proceedings in Parliament. He wrote at once to the Colonial Office resigning his post, and issued to the people of Canada a proclamation complaining in the bitterest terms of the treatment he had received.[1]

Durham's indiscretion, Oct. 1838.

A grotesque situation indeed! the Queen's Commissioner appealing against the Queen's Government to the very people who had lately been in arms against it.

Once more the ocean mails treated Durham unkindly. His undutiful proclamation reached London before his letter of resignation.[2] Glenelg at once conveyed to him a severe reprimand from the Cabinet, concluding with an intimation of his dismissal from the office of High Commis-

[1] The proclamation will be found in the *Annual Register*, 1838, p. 311.
[2] Ibid., p. 322.

sioner. It is not necessary to dwell upon the circumstances of Lord Durham's return, nor upon the infelicitous coincidence that, at the moment when he was expounding his grievance to the citizens of Plymouth and claiming to have "effaced the remains of a disastrous rebellion," news arrived in Liverpool that the rebellion had broken out again.[1] It is more agreeable to record the ultimate result of his mission. Whatever errors he may have committed in his administration, they were amply atoned for by the permanent result of the scheme which he laid before the Cabinet for the future constitution and government of Canada. Based upon the hopelessness of reconciling the interests of the French and British communities until they should be reunited under a single legislature, it contained wise recommendations for settling the specific grievances of Upper and Lower Canada.

Lord Durham's scheme for the government of Canada, 1839.

Action upon the report was delayed by the resignation of the Melbourne Ministry on 7th May 1839. When they resumed office a few days later, Lord John Russell took the Colonial Office which had been resigned by Glenelg, hopelessly discredited as he was by his feeble administration. On 3rd June Russell tabled two resolutions, the first embodying Durham's scheme for legislative union of the Canadas, the second continuing for three years the special powers of the High Commissioner under the Canada Act. The first of these was abandoned owing to a strong remonstrance from the Upper Canadian House of Assembly (the constitution of Lower Canada still being suspended); the second was embodied in a Bill which passed with consent of the Opposition.

When Durham left Canada, Sir John Colborne had been induced to withdraw his resignation, and had acted as interim High Commissioner as well as Commander-in-Chief. His services were rewarded by a peerage and a pension of £2000 a year for three lives, and Mr. Poulett Thomson was sent out as High Commissioner. To no fitter

Mr. Poulett Thomson appointed High Commissioner, 1839.

[1] It was speedily suppressed by Colborne, whom the Government had requested to withdraw his resignation, and who was acting as supreme authority in Canada after Durham's departure.

person could the task of restoring tranquillity have been entrusted. He administered his office with so much tact and prudence as to win over public opinion in both provinces to the proposed union, which was at last effected by proclamation on 10th February 1841, the eighty-second anniversary of the cession of Canada to the British Crown. Mr. Poulett Thomson was appointed first Governor-General and was raised to the peerage as Lord Sydenham. The Act of Parliament constituting this important advance in colonial policy was unfortunately shorn of some valuable provisions by the Conservative Opposition. While Peel and Stanley cordially supported the principle of union and the admission of the colonial electorate to control of their executive, they considered that free municipal institutions had not received long enough trial in the mother-country to justify the experiment being tried in Canada, and they compelled the Government to drop the local government clauses. This caused the Governor-General "the deepest mortification."

Union of Upper and Lower Canada, 10th Feb. 1841.

"Entertaining so strongly as I do the conviction that the principal advantages intended by the Union Act are defeated by the omission of this part of the scheme, I confess that I should strongly incline to defer acting upon the powers conferred by it, and proclaiming the Union at all, until Parliament had again had an opportunity of reconsidering these clauses. But I must acknowledge that the delay which would thus arise, and the re-opening the Canada question in England, where unfortunately all that relates to this country is so little understood, would be probably attended with greater evils, and I cannot, therefore, take on myself the responsibility of recommending that course."[1]

Notwithstanding that, contrary to the advice of the capable man on the spot, the colonists were not yet entirely freed from leading-strings, they received control of their executive and finances—a larger instalment of self-government than had as yet been accorded to any colony—and made handsome acknowledgment by returning a majority for the Government at the first general election in March 1841. Unhappily, neither he who designed the union

[1] Lord Sydenham to Lord John Russell, 16th Sept. 1840.

nor he whose admirable sagacity and tact had commended it to the colonists lived to behold the fruit of their labour. Lord Durham died in July 1840, and Lord Sydenham in September 1841, each being in his forty-ninth year.

It was reserved for a Conservative Government to complete the edifice whereof the foundations had been thus firmly laid by their opponents. Lord Durham in his report had indicated federation of all British possessions in North America as the ultimate aim to be kept in view, but difficulty of communication remained a chief obstacle to this for many years. The trade of Canada naturally found its principal markets in the United States, and this was greatly stimulated by a Reciprocity Treaty struck between the Republic and the British colony in 1854. British statesmen of all parties had tacitly acquiesced in the probability of the British provinces becoming merged ultimately in the great Republic on their frontier.[1] In 1865, after friction arising out of the great civil war had brought Great Britain into disfavour with the Washington Cabinet, American statesmen thought to accelerate annexation by withdrawing the preferential terms of trade. Accordingly the Reciprocity Treaty was denounced in 1865, with results wholly unforeseen. The bond between the colonies and the mother-land, which British statesmen had done so little to maintain, was far stronger than it had entered into the Republican heart to conceive. Canadians, thus put upon their mettle, resolved to seek fresh outlets for their industry if the markets of the United States were to be closed to them. The intercolonial railway between Ottawa and Halifax was begun, and in 1867 Lord Derby's Government took up the measure prepared by their predecessors in office, and, with

The Dominion of Canada constituted, 1867.

[1] Not always tacitly. In 1867 Mr. John Bright, from his place in the House of Commons, openly expressed the indifference then prevailing in regard to our empire overseas by declaring that he hoped the Canadians would take the course which they considered best for themselves, whether that led to complete independence, to incorporation with the United States, or to confederation. In 1869, Lord Granville, Colonial Secretary, wrote to Lord Russell—"Our relations with North America are of a very delicate character. The best solution of them would probably be that, in the course of time and in the most friendly spirit, the Dominion should find itself strong enough to declare her independence" (Fitzmaurice's *Lord Granville*, ii. 22).

the willing support of the Liberal Opposition, passed a Federation Act providing for the voluntary union of all the British possessions in North America. The Dominion of Canada was constituted, with a Governor-General and central Parliament at Ottawa, and a Lieutenant-General and local legislature in each province. Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, with a population at that time of about 4,000,000, entered the federation at once; British Columbia followed in 1871, and Newfoundland is the only colony remaining aloof at the present time.[1]

[1] The Dominion of Canada now covers about 3,745,600 square miles, with a population of 5,766,600. Trade with the United States still exceeds that with the United Kingdom by nearly one-third.

CHAPTER VI

Political disquiet in Jamaica—Resignation of the Melbourne Ministry—Sir Robert Peel forms a Cabinet—The Bedchamber difficulty—Lord Melbourne resumes office—Discontent among the working class—Origin of the Chartists—Fatal riot at Newport, Mon.—Postal reform—Sir Rowland Hill—Conservatives oppose the Penny Post—Penny Post established—National Education—Royal Commissions on Irish Education—English Educational Societies—The State assumes control of elementary education—Conservatives oppose Educational Reform—Address of the Lords refused by the Queen—Effect of the reforming spirit on the churches—The Oxford Movement—John Keble—"Tracts for the Times"—Edward Bouverie Pusey—Renn Dickson Hampden—Tract No. 90 and rupture of the Tractarians—Secession of Newman and his associates—Ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland—The question of Lay Patronage—Dr. Thomas Chalmers—The case of Strathbogie Presbytery—The Disruption.

LORD NORMANBY, succeeding Lord Glenelg as Colonial Secretary, found trouble awaiting him in another part of the Empire. The liberation of negro apprentices in 1838, as already described,[1] left the planters of Jamaica in a state of intense irritation, which nearly broke out in open rebellion when an Act was passed by the Imperial Parliament reforming the prison system of that colony. The House of Assembly, declaring that their rights had been unconstitutionally invaded, declined to legislate or vote supplies. The Governor, Sir Lionel Smith, prorogued the Assembly to allow time for reflection; when it met again, as the members refused to proceed to business, he dissolved it; but the new House, elected upon a total constituency of not more than 2000 voters, proved as obstinate as the old one, and Normanby was compelled to ask Parliament to suspend the constitution of Jamaica for five years. In some respects the situation was on all-fours with that of Lower Canada, but there was this material difference between the two cases, that whereas the trouble in Canada was caused by want of timely attention to legitimate grievances, the West Indian planters had no

Political disquiet in Jamaica, 1838–39.

[1] Vol. ii. p. 12, *supra*.

legitimate grievances, having been most liberally indemnified for the loss of slave labour. No satisfactory explanation is forthcoming of Peel's action in opposing the Jamaica Bill. If it had been right to suspend the constitution of Lower Canada, a course to which the Conservative Opposition had assented, surely there was as much good reason for doing so in the case of Jamaica. Nevertheless, on the second reading, Peel led his followers into the No lobby, where they were joined by nine Radicals; Government escaped defeat by a bare majority of five, and resigned next day.

Resignation of the Melbourne Ministry, 7th May 1839.

The Queen, a Whig by inclination and early training, was greatly upset by the prospect of losing the Minister who, by his amiability and wise counsel, had secured not only her confidence but her warm and intimate affection. Her distrust of the Conservatives was as deep as that of her uncles had been for the Whigs. Acting on Melbourne's advice, she sent for Wellington, in whom, as she said at the time, she felt more confidence than in any other of his party.[1] The Duke, already in his seventieth year, excused himself on the ground of his want of influence in the House of Commons, and advised Her Majesty to lay her commands on Peel, who impressed her very unfavourably. "He is such a cold, odd man," she wrote to Melbourne after the first interview, "the Queen can't make out what he means. . . . The Queen don't like his manner after—oh! how different, how dreadfully different, to that frank, open, natural, and most kind, warm manner of Lord Melbourne."[2]

Peel forms a Cabinet, May 1839.

Peel had no difficulty in getting together an efficient crew, Stanley and Graham taking office as Secretaries of State; but a storm breaking from an unexpected quarter wrecked his vessel before she could leave her moorings. Being informed, to his surprise, that the parliamentary posts in the Royal Household fell to be vacated on a change of government and must be filled up, he got a Red Book, as he afterwards explained to the House of Commons, and learnt from it for the first time what were these offices. He then submitted to the Queen a list of persons to replace

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria* (Popular Edition), i. 158. [2] Ibid., 159.

all except those below the rank of Lady of the Bedchamber. Now the Queen, as was most natural in a girl not out of her teens, had become warmly attached to those Whig ladies whom Melbourne had appointed to her first Household, and flatly refused to part with them.[1] Affairs speedily got into an unconstitutional and amusing, because innocuous, muddle. The Queen wrote vehement complaints to her late Prime Minister against her present one—"this is *infamous*," was one expression she used; Melbourne held meetings of his late colleagues, which he reported to the Queen as if they had been Cabinet councils,[2] and advised her that her Minister was "pressing your Majesty more hardly than any Minister ever pressed a Sovereign before."[3]

The Bedchamber difficulty, May 1839.

Peel would not yield, neither would the Queen; so on 10th May the Melbourne Ministry was recalled to office, explanations were made in both Houses of Parliament, and the incident disappeared in a cloud of angry gossip. The disputed point remained unsettled till after the Queen's marriage; when, on the suggestion of her Consort, the rule was laid down that, on a change of Ministry, the Queen Regnant should arrange for the voluntary resignation of any ladies whom, being near relations or very intimate friends of leaders in Opposition, the Prime Minister might deem it inexpedient to retain in office.

The discontent which had been smouldering among the working classes in industrial centres ever since it had become patent that the enfranchisement of the middle classes had brought no amelioration of the labouring man's lot, now passed into an active phase, calling for stern measures of repression. Political agitators, who might have declaimed harmlessly enough in prosperous times, found plenty of attentive hearers among the masses who were hard hit by the severe winter of 1837–38. During eight months of 1839 wheat ruled upwards of 70s. a quarter, and the

Discontent among the working class, 1838–39.

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria* (Popular Edition), i. 164–6. "I was very young then," said the Queen to Sir Arthur Bigge in 1897, "and perhaps I should act differently if it were all to be done again."

[2] Ibid., 162.

[3] Ibid., 164.

consequent destitution deepened the detestation so generally entertained for the new Poor Law. Easy at such times to inflame the passions of the populace by dwelling upon the contrast between the privations of the virtuous poor and the superfluities of the selfish rich, keeping well out of view the immediate consequences to wage-earners if the well-to-do were to curtail their expenditure. Hungry working men were easily persuaded that the glaring inequalities of possession were the outcome of privilege, and that the only remedy lay in further parliamentary reform. It is true, moreover, that the rapid growth of industrial communities since the beginning of the century, and the consequent development of crowded centres of industry, had not been met by corresponding adjustment of the rights of masters and servants. Artisans and miners were at undue disadvantage in negotiating with their employers, owing to stringent legal restriction upon the action of trades unions. A whole generation had still to pass away before a Conservative Government in 1875 should abolish criminal proceedings in cases of breach of engagement, placing employer and employed on equal terms as parties to a contract, and enacting that nothing which it was legal for an individual workman to do should be illegal when done by a combination of workmen.

The Whig leaders having declined to reopen the question of electoral reform, some Radical members of Parliament invited representatives of the Working Men's Association to a conference, at which a document was drawn up embodying the demands of the proletariate in six articles, namely, universal male suffrage, annual parliaments, equal electoral districts, vote by ballot, payment of members, and abolition of the property qualification then required for members of Parliament.—"There is your Charter!" exclaimed Daniel O'Connell, handing it to the secretary of the Working Men's Association; "agitate for it, and never be content with anything less." Thereafter the supporters of the movement were known as Chartists, and in itself there was nothing very formidable in their scheme, nor anything that might not have been advanced upon constitu-

Origin of the Chartists, 1839.

tional lines; but, like all popular upheavals, the reckless zeal of some of its leaders, and the angry impatience of their followers, soon brought it into collision with the forces of law and order.

At Birmingham and other manufacturing centres there were violent outbreaks, the most dangerous taking place in November at Newport in Monmouthshire, where a linendraper named John Frost, who had been mayor in 1836 and had been removed from the commission of the peace for inciting to sedition, led several thousand Welsh miners to release a prisoner from gaol. The mayor, Sir T. Phillips, with a lieutenant and thirty men of the 45th Regiment, made a gallant stand against the rioters, finally dispersing them with a loss of ten killed and about fifty wounded, the mayor himself receiving two gunshot wounds. Frost and two others were tried for high treason by special commission and condemned to death;[1] but with the new reign had dawned a milder influence upon the courts; the death sentence was commuted to one of transportation for life; even that being afterwards remitted, so that Frost was allowed to return to England in 1856 with a free pardon, to find himself forgotten and the Chartist movement a mere memory of an unquiet past.

Fatal riot at Newport, Mon., Nov. 1839.

Amid these conditions of unrest the sands of Melbourne's last administration were running out. Remembered chiefly in connection with conflicts with Chartist mobs in the country and with its own Radical allies in Parliament, it deserves more generous recognition as the instrument for conferring a signal and permanent benefit affecting every household in the nation. Nobody at this time connects penny postage with the memory either of the Melbourne Cabinet in general or of Mr. Spring Rice as Chancellor of the Exchequer in particular, although a few may bear in mind one of those unobtrusive, but indispensable, permanent officials upon whose labour has been reared the renown of many a statesman. It was a humble school-teacher who conceived and wrought out in every detail a scheme of postal reform.

Postal reform, 1839.

[1] *Annual Register*, 1840, pp. 203–219.

Rowland Hill, the son of a Birmingham schoolmaster, was born in 1795. While still a lad he developed an extraordinary faculty for arithmetic, and was appointed mathematical master in his father's school. It is said that he came to apply his peculiar talent to the study of Post Office statistics through hearing a story about Coleridge, who happened to see a poor woman in the Lake District refuse to accept delivery of a letter from a postman because she could not afford to pay the shilling postage. On being told that the letter was from the woman's brother, Coleridge at once offered to pay the fee, and did so, although she seemed unwilling to receive it. Her reluctance was explained, so soon as the postman's back was turned, by her showing Coleridge that the letter consisted of nothing but a blank sheet. It had been agreed between her and her brother that he should send her such a blank sheet once a quarter so long as he was well and prosperous, marking the cover so that she should not accept delivery, and yet receive this mute assurance that all was well. Hill easily detected the economic fallacy in a system which lent itself to such simple evasion, and set about calculating for a sounder one.

Sir Rowland Hill, 1795–1879.

In 1837 he published a pamphlet containing, *inter alia*, proposals for a uniform charge of one penny on letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight, irrespective of distance, to be prepaid by stamps so as to avoid the vast waste of time involved in collecting fees on delivery, and for the abolition of franks. The public had long grumbled, as well they might, about the postal regulations in force at the time. Letters could not be prepaid; the fees, varying according to distance, were collected from recipients on delivery. A letter posted in London was delivered in Brighton for a fee of eightpence; the rate from London to Aberdeen was 1s. 3d., and to Belfast 1s. 4d., and to other places in proportion. Members of Paliament were entitled to free delivery of letters received, and to frank those they sent out; and the heavy charges upon unofficial individuals led to gross abuse of franks, Ministers and members of Parliament being constantly pestered for them by relatives, friends, and constituents.

Nor was that all. The Post Office had then the monopoly, which it still retains, of conveying correspondence; but the high rates had driven people to divers illegal and clandestine devices for infringing it. It was proved before the Select Committee appointed to consider Hill's scheme that five-sixths of the correspondence between London and Manchester had been smuggled for many years, one great firm having despatched sixty-seven letters by unlawful agency for every one that went through the Post Office. Between 1815 and 1835 the population had increased by 30 per cent., and the stage-coach duty by 128 per cent., yet the revenue of the Post Office had remained stationary. Clearly the revenue was being defrauded, and the public were not being served as they were entitled to be; yet, at first, the official mind recoiled before the magnitude of Hill's proposals for reform. When Brougham called attention to them in the House of Lords, the Postmaster-General, Lord Lichfield, declared that of all the wild and extravagant schemes he had ever listened to, this was the wildest and most extravagant. Nevertheless, the Select Committee reported in 1838 favourably to the change, recommending, however, a uniform rate of twopence per half-ounce instead of one penny; but Spring Rice had been convinced by the thoroughness of Hill's estimates, and provided in his budget of 1839 for a penny post to all parts of the United Kingdom, coupled with abolition of the parliamentary privilege of franking letters. He deserved the greater credit for courage, because he was faced by a deficit of three-quarters of a million in his budget, besides being opposed by financiers of such high repute as Peel and Goulburn. Their hostile amendment was defeated by a majority of 102 (Ayes 215, Noes 113), and the new rates took effect from 10th January 1840.

The Conservatives oppose the Penny Post, 1839.

"A million of revenue is given up," complained Sydney Smith, "to the nonsensical penny post scheme to please my old, excellent, and universally dissentient friend Noah Warburton.[1] I admire the Whig Ministry, and think they have done more good things than all the Ministries since the Revolution; but these concessions

[1] Henry Warburton (1784–1858); philosophical Radical; M.P. 1826–47.

are sad and unworthy marks of weakness, and fill reasonable men with alarm."

At first it seemed as if the witty Canon's foreboding was to be fulfilled, for the Post Office revenue fell from £1,649,000 in 1839 to £495,000 in 1840;[1] but the adoption of the principle of small profits and quick returns has wrought effects which amply justified Rowland Hill's sanguine anticipation, the sale of postage stamps alone having produced in 1908–9 a gross sum of more than eighteen millions sterling. Hill himself can hardly have contemplated the ultimate dimensions of the system which he founded. In 1837, the year in which he published his pamphlet, there were delivered in the United Kingdom through the Post Office 80,000 letters and 44,000 newspapers—a total of 124,000 deliveries. In 1906–7 the deliveries (exclusive of telegrams) ran up to the stupendous total of 4,862,920,000, representing 31,152 times the volume of business transacted in 1837. Primitive Australasian tribes had no names for numbers beyond two; their scale of notation used to run "one, two, many, very many."[2] There is no limit to the scale of numeration among civilised nations, yet very few persons are able to apprehend the reality of a million. Perhaps the magnitude of postal business at the present day may best be illustrated by its miscarriages. The value of property found in letters opened at the Returned Letter Office in twelve months 1906–7 amounted to £714,361, 12s.[3]

National education, 1833–39.

No whit inferior to Post Office reform, either in importance or in its ultimate expansion, was another act of the Melbourne Cabinet in 1839; but whereas the Government had embarked boldly upon Hill's venture for better or worse, they proceeded ten-

[1] Spring Rice had estimated the immediate loss at £700,000.

[2] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. 243.

[3] Rowland Hill's services received adequate recognition by the State. In 1840 he was appointed to a post in the Treasury to direct the reform he had initiated, but he went out of office with the Melbourne Government in 1841. When the Liberals returned to power in 1846 he received a grant of £13,360 and was appointed Secretary to the Post Office. In 1860 he was knighted; in 1864 he received an honorary degree of D.C.L. from Oxford University, and, retiring from office in the same year, Parliament voted him a grant of £20,000, besides allowing him to retain his annual salary of £2000 for life. Finally, he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

tatively and upon a very moderate scale in the matter of national education. Previous to 1833 not a penny of public money had been devoted to English schools, elementary education depending entirely upon voluntary enterprise and testamentary benefaction. In Scotland it was different; in that country the obligation had been laid upon landowners, by an Act of the Scots Parliament in 1696, of providing a school-house in every parish and paying the teacher an adequate salary, and greatly had the Scottish people profited by the advantage thus secured to them. In Ireland alone did education receive State aid; but the gift was poisoned by the policy of Protestant ascendancy. An attempt was made in the eighteenth century to suppress the religion of Rome in Ireland by subsidising Protestant Charter Schools, and prohibiting Roman Catholic priests and laymen from educating scholars. Consequently, while the needs of English children were supplied, not universally but in a very considerable degree, by Church schools, charity schools, and educational endowments, and the Scots peasantry took full advantage of the schools provided in every parish, the Irish populace sank ever deeper in illiteracy and neglect.

But neither Pitt nor Castlereagh entertained any illusions about Protestant ascendancy; nor did Lord Grenville, whose Cabinet of "All the Talents" appointed a Royal Commission in 1806 to inquire into the system of education in Ireland. The Commission reported voluminously; so did a second Commission appointed by the Tories in 1824: between them they issued no fewer than three-and-twenty reports, to digest which a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed in 1827. The recommendations of all three inquiries were of the same tenor—provide educational facilities for Irish children, but don't meddle with their religion. In accordance with this wise policy, Lord Stanley, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, passed a Bill through Parliament establishing a National Board of Education in Dublin, composed jointly of Protestants and Roman Catholics, committing thereto the expenditure of the parliamentary grant, and limiting religious instruction in State-aided schools to certain fixed

Royal Commissions on Education in Ireland, 1806, 1824.

hours. In 1838 between 160,000 and 170,000 children were being educated in schools under the National Board.

English societies for promoting education, 1807–39.

In England a Christian, but unsectarian, body called the British and Foreign School Society was founded in 1807, with the motto, "Schools for all!" The rulers of the Church of England could not regard with favour any organisation to promote education unaccompanied by religious instruction in the principles of the Established Church, so they set up in 1809 a National School Society for the promotion of education upon that basis. In 1832 Lord Brougham induced the Government to make a fresh departure by allotting £10,000 a year to each of these societies, to be applied by them in assisting local expenditure in building schools, and contributing to the expenses of existing schools, in proportion to voluntary local effort and to the number of pupils attending each. The result of this, the first recognition by the State of an obligation to assist the secular education of the people, was an immediate stimulus to private liberality. In four years, 1834–37, against the parliamentary contribution of £78,798 to school-building, a sum of £165,143 was raised from private sources, besides £233,947 to defray educational expenses. But the system told harshly upon poor districts, which could raise little or nothing, and therefore received little or no aid. In 1837 the total number of children attending schools in England and Wales was greater by 153,600 than it had been in 1833. Still, in the absence of any system of inspection, Parliament had no guarantee either as to the quality of the education or the physical conditions under which it was given; so in 1839 Lord John Russell brought forward a new scheme by which the annual grant should be increased to £30,000, to be administered by a committee of the Privy Council, part of the increased grant being applied to the systematic inspection of schools.

The State assumes control of elementary education, 1839.

"The principles," said Russell, "I laid down were that the youth of the kingdom should be religiously brought up, and that the rights of conscience should be respected."[1]

[1] *Recollections and Suggestions*, 149.

The mere mention of conscience raised the bogey of sectarian acrimony which it was intended to propitiate. It is strange to find Lord Stanley, author of the Irish National Board of Education, leading opposition to Russell's Bill on the ground that it took education out of the hands of the Church, where it had reposed since the time of Henry IV., and committed it to a council of laymen. Mr. Gladstone, who had recently published his famous manifesto—*The State in its relations to the Church*—was as vehement as Stanley in denouncing the impious proposals of the Government, and was followed in the same line by Mr. Disraeli. At last, after four nights had been spent in a most unedifying wrangle, the Government obtained the vote of £30,000 by a majority of two!

The Conservatives oppose educational reform, 1839.

In the House of Lords opposition to the measure took a different and more impressive form. Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury, moved six wordy resolutions, and induced the peers, by a majority of 111, to agree to an address praying the Sovereign to cancel the appointment of the Committee of the Privy Council, to which, being a political body, they deemed it improper to commit the spiritual interests of the children. The Lords waited upon her Majesty in a body to present their address, and the Queen's reply, in accordance with the advice of her Ministers, constituted her first critical and important act of State as a constitutional monarch. After expressing regret that they should have thought it necessary to take such a step, she said that it had been with a deep sense of her duty to the Established Church that she had appointed a committee of the Privy Council to distribute the grants voted for education, and that she was confident this would be done "with due respect to the rights of conscience and with a faithful attention to the security of the Established Church."

Address from the Lords to the Crown, 1839.

It was a bold thing for a Minister, supported in the House of Commons by a majority of only two, and defeated in the House of Lords by a majority of 111, to employ the Sovereign's prerogative to carry his measure through; but it was justified by success. The first step had now been

taken in the long march of national education, whereof later developments will fall to be noted hereafter. It was not achieved without much bitter bandying, as is inevitable in all matters concerning the unseen and undemonstrable; so truly was it spoken by the Master—"I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." Harsh has been the judgment pronounced by Liberal writers upon the Church's action in resisting the first attempt to secularise education; but it is surely possible to object to dogmatic instruction and yet recognise that the Church of England would have betrayed her trust had she not striven to maintain it. The legislature had established her and committed to her "the moral and religious instruction of the great mass of the people of this country,"[1] because it was held to be the only sure repository and channel of true doctrine; what might not have been said against the bishops if, while continuing to enjoy the revenues of their sees, they had, without protest, acquiesced in the functions of their clergy as spiritual instructors being transferred to a committee of lay politicians? What guarantee had they that the schools might not be allowed to become seminaries of doctrine which the Church of England held to be false? Let men hold what opinions they may about the expediency of maintaining an established church; but let them have the generosity to recognise the fidelity of the clergy to their ordination vows[2] and their courage in defending a losing cause, if lost it prove to be; but let them desist from embittering strife by railing at the Church for striving selfishly to maintain a monopoly,[3] and denouncing the clergy for the "folly too often characteristic of their profession."[4]

It is specially important to judge fairly the motives and policy of the English bishops at this time, when the Establishment was in the first throes of a movement that was to affect its character and influence among generations yet unborn. It was not to be expected that the

[1] Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords, 5th July 1839.

[2] In the service for the Ordination of Priests, the Bishop asks, "Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, *to banish and drive away* all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word?" and the candidate answers, "I will, the Lord being my helper."

[3] Walpole's *England*, iii. 488.

[4] Ibid., 489.

tempest of reform which shook the State to its foundations should leave the churches unmoved. Its immediate effect upon the Church of Ireland has been described in an earlier chapter; nearly forty years were to pass before the ultimate result should be manifest. The English and Scottish churches were profoundly affected also, but in different ways, whereof only the outstanding features can receive notice here, the movement in each church having furnished matter for an extensive bibliography of its own.

Effect of the reforming spirit upon the churches, 1832.

In recounting the phases of the Church of England, historians agree in censure upon the lethargy of her clergy in the eighteenth century, their lack of enthusiasm, and their meagre and neglectful performance of public worship. Nor can one fail to recognise the obvious parallel between the Church of Laodicea and the Church of England under the Georgian dynasty. The typical English clergyman had sunk the priest in the pastor, and lay patrons usually esteemed a parish minister more highly for his social and scholarly attainments than for earnestness in doctrine and vigilance in duty. The Church remained militant only in regard to Romish encroachment and Dissenting defection.

Still, in this, as in all generalising, there is risk of overlooking what is good and exaggerating what is evil. If outward fervour was lacking, there remained much personal piety. A hundred years ago London did not monopolise the social life of the upper classes to the same extent it does now, and it would be a grievous mistake to gauge the morality of the nation by the court annals of the Regency. If the clergy had suffered their priestly authority to fall into disuse, it was partly because the average Englishman's temperament recoils from sacerdotalism. Perhaps the best, because the most charitable, criticism upon a church that had produced the two Wesleys and Whitefield in the eighteenth century, and was to produce a Whateley and an Arnold, a Newman and a Pusey, in the nineteenth, is that pronounced by the late Dean Church: "The beauty of the English Church in this time was its family life of purity and simplicity: its blot was quiet worldliness."[1]

[1] *The Oxford Movement*, p. 3.

Such were the characteristics which had enabled the Church of England, *beata possidens*, to survive the gales of Methodist revival which swept tens of thousands of her flock into another fold; they might even have screened her from the more violent blast of reform when, long pent up, it burst upon every institution in the realm, had it not been that, besides lukewarmness, she possessed another feature in common with the Church of Laodicea—she was "rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing." The time had come when a reformed Parliament was to demand an account of every stewardship, and had already given earnest of its purpose by suppressing half the Irish bishoprics. It was no simple matter for an easy-going hierarchy to justify its enjoyment of ample endowments. "The Church, as it now stands, no human power can save," wrote Dr. Arnold in 1832.

The Oxford Movement, 1833.

Let it not be supposed, however, that anxiety for her temporal safety was the sole, or even the principal, source of the revival which began to stir the English Church at this time. The imminence of danger merely hastened and brought to a head a reaction which had long been brewing. It roused to activity certain earnest and powerful minds, dissatisfied with the prevailing laxity of clerical discipline and the religious lassitude of the people, which were thrown into strong relief by the rapid progress of natural science and the energy and boldness of its teachers. Ever since the days of Galileo the relations between religion and science had been, at best, but an armed truce, under cover of which the rationalists had carried their parallels far within what the Church claimed to be her lines of enceinte. It was in 1831 that the newly formed British Association held its first meeting at York; in the following year it assembled in the Meccah of Protestant orthodoxy, Oxford, whence, in the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe had gone forth, the first champion against papal and clerical aggression—Oxford, which in the eighteenth century had sent out the Wesleys and Whitefield to rekindle the faith of the masses—Oxford, whence Whateley and Arnold, each on his own line, had lately striven to rouse the Church from her lethargy to a sense of her spiritual prerogative.

It is to the influence of John Keble that what is known as the Oxford or Tractarian Movement must primarily be traced. Winner of a double-first and Oriel fellowship in 1811 and the Latin and English Essays in 1812, he left Oxford to become a Gloucestershire curate in 1823, and, being a high Tory, deeply convinced of the lofty nature of his calling, conceived an earnest distaste for the Evangelical or Low Church Christianity which, as the reflex result of Methodist fervour, had gained considerable following within the Establishment. He entertained as strong aversion for Rome as he did for Protestant Dissent; but he was no firebrand, and owed the great influence he was to wield over others more to his gentle, joyous disposition and the charm of his conversation than to personal energy in promulgating his views. The motive power in the movement came from the young men who gathered round Keble, sharing his aspirations—Richard Hurrell Froude, John Newman, William Palmer, H. J. Rose, and a few others. Nevertheless, to use a homely metaphor, it was Keble's gentle hand that turned on the steam.

John Keble, 1792–1866.

"On 14th July 1833," wrote Cardinal Newman in his *Apologia*, "Mr. Keble preached the Assize sermon in the University pulpit. It was published under the title of *National Apostasy*. I have ever considered and kept the day as the start of the religious movement of 1833."

Between the 25th and 29th of the same month a conference was held by some of those named above at Rose's rectory of Hadleigh, who formed themselves into an Association of Friends of the Church, intended to resist all inroads upon her doctrines or departure from primitive practice in her offices, and, above all, to maintain her claim to apostolical succession. In order to give effect to their views and to unite all Churchmen who were alarmed by the attitude of the reformed Parliament towards the Establishment, they undertook, on Newman's initiative, the publication of a remarkable series of leaflets entitled *Tracts for the Times*. The immediate effect of these brief, but stern and stirring, appeals to the consciences and apprehensions of all who

Tracts for the Times, 1833–41.

would give the matter a thought, was far more powerful than could have been expected, even in the days before cheap postage loaded every man's table daily with appeals, schemes, prospectuses, and what not. By the end of 1834, forty-six of these tracts had been issued, earning for the anonymous authors and their associates the nickname of Tractarians.

Newman was responsible for several of these tracts, which brought thousands outside Oxford into touch with the movement; but the other writers have acknowledged that the chief stimulus within the University was given by Newman's four o'clock sermons at St. Mary's.[1]

"The service," wrote Principal Shairp, "was very simple—no pomp, no ritualism; for it was characteristic of the leading men of the movement that they left these things to the weaker brethren. . . . What there was of High Church teaching was implied rather than enforced. The local, the temporary, and the modern were ennobled by the presence of the Catholic truth belonging to all ages that pervaded the whole."

Among many whose adherence was secured by these sermons was one whose standing in the University caused him to become ultimately the leader and eponymus of the revival. Dr. Pusey, Professor and Canon of Christ Church, brought to the band of young men the weight of his name, his reputation for learning, and his position. "Without him," testified Cardinal Newman, "we should have had no chance, especially at the early date of 1834, of making any serious resistance to Liberal aggression." Pusey's hand in the movement made itself felt at once by a marked change in the Tracts from earnest appeal to doctrinal disputation, whereby the floodgates of controversy were thrown open.

Edward Bouverie Pusey, 1800–82.

Christians being prone to forget the charter and shibboleth bequeathed to them by their Founder—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"—the conflict which arose in Oxford assumed much the same bitterness as that which rent Florence in the time of Savonarola—a bitterness which

[1] Dean Church's *Oxford Movement*, pp. 113, 121–126.

seems inseparable from all discussion of the undemonstrable. Archbishop Whateley began by deriding the Tractarians as "children of the mist" and "veiled prophets"; but when their work began to attract serious attention he denounced it as "this rapidly spreading pestilence." Dr. Arnold belaboured them in the *Edinburgh Review* in an article which he allowed the editor, Macvey Napier, to entitle "The Oxford Malignants." The feelings of ordinary worldly churchmen were pretty accurately reflected in a saying attributed to Lord Melbourne, after he had listened to a Tractarian sermon—"Things have come to a pretty pass if religion is to invade the sphere of private life."

It so happened that it was an act of Melbourne's that gave the Tractarians their first opportunity of a trial of strength with their opponents in the University. Conspicuous among these opponents was Dr. Hampden, an outspoken Latitudinarian, who had been Bampton lecturer in 1832, and in 1834 had published a pamphlet advocating that candidates for matriculation should no longer be required to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. The Tractarians refrained from rejoinder, unwilling to advertise Hampden's pamphlet to the public outside Oxford. But when, two years later, Melbourne appointed the rationalist Hampden to the Chair of Divinity, they took up arms to some purpose.

Renn Dickson Hampden, 1793–1868.

"Our petition to the throne," wrote one of their original members, "against this appointment was rejected, and Dr. Hampden became professor. We met again, and petitioned the Heads of Houses to bring before Convocation a censure of the errors advanced in Dr. Hampden's writings. . . . Again and again was our petition rejected by the majority . . . and again did we return to the contest with increased numbers and determination. All divisions and jealousies were forgotten in this noble effort. It was at length successful to a certain extent, and the Heads of Houses concurred in bringing forward a censure on Dr. Hampden . . . which was passed in Convocation by an overwhelming majority."[1]

Observe the reference to "divisions and jealousies." Although acting from motives as pure and disinterested as ever inspired human action, the followers of Newman and

[1] Palmer's *Narrative of Events*, p. 130.

Pusey could not escape the common experience of both reformers and revolutionaries. They had not been acting together for more than three years before different tendencies divided them into two wings; the one led by Keble and Pusey adhering to the original purpose of defending the apostolical prerogative of the Church of England and maintaining inviolate her doctrines, services, and discipline, and therefore sternly vigilant against Romish tendencies;[1] the other, under the immediate guidance of Newman and W. G. Ward, steadily gravitating towards the Church of Rome, irresistibly under the spell of her unrivalled authority.

Tract No. 90, and rupture of the Tractarians, 1841.

Matters were brought to a head by the publication in 1841 of Tract No. 90, which proved to be the last of this memorable series. It was from the hand of Newman, dealing with the Thirty-nine Articles in detail, and was written, not without taint of casuistry, to minimise the difference in doctrine between the Churches of Rome and England, and to prove that the Articles were directed, not against the faith of Rome, but against her errors. These errors, it was set forth, were neither so grave nor so numerous as was popularly understood; they were apart from Catholic truth, which Romanist and Protestant might and ought to hold in common. No. 90 was, in fact, an attempt to whittle down the condemnatory language of the Articles into pious warning against excrescent beliefs and practices.

Suspicion, long smouldering, about the Romanising tendency of the Tractarian Movement seemed to be amply justified by this document. The Oxford authorities took prompt action against its authors. Newman was censured by the Board of Heads of Houses; Ward was dismissed from his Balliol lectureship; some of the bishops denounced "Puseyism" in their charges, and Dr. Pusey himself, probably the most highly revered man in Oxford, was charged with heresy, and suspended for two years from preaching within the University.

[1] "Nothing but these neglected doctrines, faithfully preached, will repress the extension of Popery, for which the ever-multiplying divisions of the religious world are too clearly preparing the way" (*Advertisement to vol. i. of the Tracts*, November 1834).

Strange as it may seem, in view of what was soon to be manifest, it was Newman himself who had retarded the drift to Rome. So strong were the ties of affection that bound him to the Church of England that he resisted with all his might the force that was carrying him away from it.

"O that thy creed were sound!
For thou dost soothe the heart, thou Church of Rome,
By thy unwearied watch and varied round
Of service, in thy Saviour's holy home.
I cannot walk the city's sultry streets,
But the wide porch invites to still retreats,
Where passion's thirst is calmed, and care's unthankful gloom." [1]

Lingering long on the brink, he spent three years in seclusion and prayer at Littlemore. He had laboured honestly to rouse the Church of England to fulfil his conception of her authority and mission, but that Church had become, as she still remains, the Church of Compromise, and compromise, being irreconcilable with dogma, can never satisfy minds of Newman's ardent type. On 3rd October 1845 he requested the Provost of Oriel to remove his name from the college books, and five days later was received into the Church of Rome, carrying with him many of his associates in the work of revival.

Secession of Newman and his associates to Rome, 1845.

Pusey, Keble, and their adherents, faithful to their original purpose, continued unshaken by this painful severance. The regenerating movement spread far beyond the confines of Oxford; it is in progress at this day, and however deeply faithful sons of the Church may deplore the degree in which clergy of the extreme party set discipline at nought—whatever cause they may have to blush for unseemly squabbles over the paraphernalia of worship—all who have any insight into the manner and amount of daily work performed by bishops, priests, and deacons must agree that lethargy is no longer the besetting defect of the Church of England. Earnestness in public worship and increased diligence in pastoral work is the inheritance of the present generation from the Tractarians.

[1] Newman's *Lyra Apostolica*, No. 174.

While these things were getting done in the Church of England, the Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland was rent by a convulsion even more intense. Here was no question of Popish aggression, all Presbyterian sects being agreed in identifying the Church of Rome as the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse; neither had difference arisen upon points of doctrine or forms of worship. It was upon the constitution of their church that Scottish ecclesiastics fell out, and their parishioners proved as strenuous in action as their pastors.

Ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland, 1834.

To understand the case one must carry in mind the salient features of Scottish Church history since the Revolution settlement. The Act of Supremacy was rescinded in 1690, and the democratic principle was re-established by vesting the election of ministers in the congregations; although those Episcopalian clergy who would subscribe the Westminster Confession and submit to the authority of the General Assembly were allowed to retain their benefices. Hence, at the outset, arose two parties in the Scottish Establishment—the strict and orthodox Presbyterians, who detested all taint of prelacy, to be known later as the Evangelical party, and the less rigid school which afterwards acquired the title of Moderates.

In 1712, Government being anxious to secure the Church's support in the northern realm, restored lay patronage by Act of Parliament, a proceeding bitterly resented by the Evangelicals as a breach of the Act of Security, and the main, if not the sole, source of future disunion. Every year until 1784 the General Assembly instructed the Commission (a committee representing the Assembly when it was not sitting) to use all endeavour to get this Act rescinded. But whereas under that Act lay patrons were authorised "to name and propose the person to the whole congregation to be approven or disapproven," this restriction was removed in 1731 by an Act of Assembly authorising the patron "to elect and call" without reference to the congregation. This amendment was never submitted for ratification by the presbyteries, as provided in the Barrier Act of 1639, and four ministers

who denounced it as illegal from the pulpit were deposed in 1740. They formed a new and independent sect, which, after splitting into hostile schisms, coalesced in 1820 to form the United Secession Church, or United Presbyterians.[1]

In 1833, then, the year which witnessed the beginning of the Oxford Movement, Scottish Presbyterians were ranged in two main divisions, the Established Church and the United Presbyterians, indistinguishable from each other in doctrine and practice, differing only on the single issue of lay patronage. In the following year the Evangelical party for the first time found themselves in a majority in the General Assembly of the Established Church, significant of the effect upon Scotland of the spiritual upheaval affecting Western Christendom at this time. They prevailed upon the Assembly to pass what is known in Scottish Church history as the Veto Act, which declared that no Minister should be appointed to a parish contrary to the wishes of the congregation. A test case was soon found in a presentation to the parish of Auchterarder. It was decided against the Church by the Courts of Session; the judgment was confirmed on appeal by the House of Lords, and in 1839 the Assembly passed a resolution which, while "acknowledging the exclusive jurisdiction of the civil courts in regard to civil rights and emoluments," affirmed the Church's exclusive jurisdiction in spiritual concerns. A committee was appointed to confer with the Government and to press for a measure of relief.

The question of lay patronage, 1834.

At the head of the Evangelical or Non-Intrusion party was the most conspicuous and brilliant among Scottish divines of the day, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, to wit, Professor of Theology in Edinburgh University. His ardour and energy, combined with a delightful disposition and the gift of securing friendship, had secured for him unrivalled moral and intellectual influence

Dr. Thomas Chalmers, 1780–1847.

[1] Reinforced in 1847 by the adhesion of 118 out of 136 congregations of another sect of Presbyterians, formed in 1761 and called the Relief Church, the United Presbyterians were incorporated with the Free Church in October 1900.

among the younger clergy, and upon Chalmers naturally devolved the leadership in defending the spiritual prerogative of the Church.[1]

Utter confusion now prevailed, though the magnitude of the catastrophe impending was not apparent. Chalmers and his Evangelical majority in the Assembly had rejected the authority of the law courts, but the Moderate minority still acknowledged the civil power. Accordingly, to cite one consequence out of many, when a new presentation was made to Marnoch, a parish of 2800 inhabitants, only one member signed the call and the mass of parishioners dissented. The Presbytery of Strathbogie had to decide whether they would comply with the civil law by ordaining the patron's nominee, or with the ecclesiastical law by refusing to do so. By a majority of seven to three they resolved to proceed with the ordination. The Assembly pronounced veto upon their act, and suspended the seven ministers who had voted for ordination. The Court of Session annulled the suspension, interdicted the Church from enforcing it, and prohibited Dr. Chalmers and all other ministers from officiating in the seven parishes affected. Chalmers defied the Court, and so did some other leading clergymen, by preaching in all the seven churches, and the suspended ministers defied the Assembly by formally ordaining the proscribed minister in Marnoch. Next, in May 1841, the Assembly deposed the recalcitrant seven from the office of ministry, the Court of Session responding by declaring the deposition null and void.

The case of the Strathbogie Presbytery, 1840.

The supreme civil and ecclesiastical courts of Scotland remained in this unseemly posture towards each other till November 1842, when a convocation of Evangelicals was held, and a large number of ministers signed a declaration pledging themselves to resign their livings if the legislature refused to recognise the Church's autonomy in spiritual affairs. Previous to this the General Assembly had agreed to a "claim, declaration, and protest," complaining of the

[1] "All the world [in London] wild about Dr. Chalmers; he seems truly pious, simple, and unassuming" (Wilberforce's *Diary*, 1817). For a less complimentary critic, consult the *Creevey Papers*, ii. 84.

encroachment of the Court of Session on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church. To this document, though transmitted to the Queen by the Lord High Commissioner in June, no reply was vouchsafed until January 1843. Unfortunately the protest had been supplemented by a second and simultaneous address praying for the total abolition of patronage, and Peel advised the Queen against "acquiescence in demands amounting to the abrogation of important civil rights and to the establishment in Scotland of an ecclesiastical dominion independent of all control."[1] Accordingly the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, conveyed in a long and reasoned letter a positive refusal to legislate, pointing out that, but for the illegal Veto Act of 1834, "the respective rights of the patron to present, of the congregation to object, and of the Church courts to hear, to judge, and to admit or reject, would be clear and well defined."[2]

The next step was a petition to Parliament presented through Mr. Fox Maule,[3] who moved for a committee of inquiry, which the Government declined to grant, and the average Parliament-man having been heartily sickened by what the serious Lord Ashley described as "the perilous pranks of Dr. Pusey and his disciples,"[4] the motion was rejected by 211 to 76. Thus the door was slammed in the face of the Evangelical or "Non-Intrusion" Presbyterians, and a fair opportunity for equitable settlement was allowed to slip.

The crash came on 18th May 1843, when, a protest haivng been handed in to the General Assembly signed by upwards of 200 commissioners, the Non-Intrusion ministers

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters* (Popular Edition), i. 448.

[2] The right of the Presbytery to object to a presentation had been preserved in the Act of Queen Anne and subsequent Acts of the General Assembly, but the ground of objection could only be founded upon the "life, literature, and doctrine" of the presentee. The gist of the Assembly's declaration is printed in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. ix. p. 744 *note*, and that of Sir J. Graham's reply in the *Annual Register*, 1843, pp. 240–244.

[3] Afterwards Lord Panmure and Earl of Dalhousie, whose motives were thus caustically reviewed by a shrewd Forfarshire farmer: "There's my Lord Panmure; *he* disna care muckle aboot the Kirk; but it's a grand poleetical engine!"

[4] *Peel Letters*, ii. 561.

and elders left the hall and proceeded to constitute the first Free Church Assembly, electing Dr. Chalmers their moderator. Ultimately, out of 1203 ministers and professors, 474 surrendered their benefices and joined the secession, and the disruption of the Church of Scotland was complete.[1]

The Disruption, 18th May 1843.

Looking back upon the turmoil of the Ten Years' Conflict, the grievance round which it raged seems out of all proportion to the consequence entailed. The Evangelicals were at one with the Moderates in supporting the principle of a State church; they did not object, at least in the earlier stages of the controversy, to lay patronage in itself, but only to its exercise in overriding the declared feeling of congregations and the ruling of presbyteries, and the power of the law courts to annul acts of Assembly and interdict ministers from discharging spiritual offices. On the other hand, the Moderates could scarcely have objected, perhaps would have warmly concurred, in legislation defining the relations of lay patrons and congregations as constituted by the Act of Queen Anne. Two-thirds of the Scottish members who voted in the division upon Fox Maule's motion were in favour of such relief being accorded; lay patronage in Scotland was of no such value to landowners as it was, and is, in England, where the clergy are drawn from a different social level and where advowsons have a market value. The Government acted unintelligently in refusing inquiry which might have brought into view such reasonable limitations of the rights of patrons as would have satisfied all parties. There never was greater occasion for inquiry, for neither Melbourne's nor Peel's colleagues had any insight into Scottish Church politics.[2] They

[1] In many districts, especially in the Highlands, the parish churches were so largely deserted by their congregations as to give rise to the rhyme:—

"The wee kirk, the Free Kirk, the kirk withoot a steeple;
The auld kirk, the True Kirk, the kirk withoot a people."

[2] "I have been somewhat embarrassed by the Scotch Church question, by the consciousness that I was practically utterly ignorant of it myself, and by feeling at the same time that I had no means of attaining advice or information upon which I could with any security rely" (*Lord Melbourne to Lord Dunfermline*, 20th April 1841).

"I believe the main cause of the present embarrassment is the subjection

relied for guidance on the Scottish law officers, who naturally inclined to support the Court of Session and the civil rights of patrons.

Assuming, as the Conservative Cabinet did, that a State Church was worth maintaining, it is little to the credit either of their discernment or their ingenuity that they refused to consider and failed to devise any means of averting from it the evil of schism upon a matter involving no article of Christian belief.

Still, so great is the intellectual bent of Scotsmen, laity as well as clergy, to theological disputation, and so jealous were the Evangelicals of the Erastian leaning of the Moderates, that it may be doubted whether a severance could have been postponed very long.[1]

of very many ministers of the Church of Scotland, through fear and against their own conscientious convictions, to the violence and menaces of their leaders." (*Sir R. Peel to Sir G. Sinclair*, 7th Dec. 1842.) Could any diagnosis of Scottish Presbyterianism show less acquaintance with its true character than Peel's?

[1] It is remarkable that when in 1874 the original rock of offence was removed by the Act abolishing lay patronage, the Established and Free Churches remained as far apart as ever. Vested interests and overlapping pastorates may be held mainly accountable for this illogical state of things; but it is still more remarkable to find that in the year 1900 complete fusion was effected between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, although the Free Church held that "it is the duty of the civil magistrate, when necessary and expedient, to employ the national resources in aid of the church," while the cardinal principle of the United Presbyterians was that "inasmuch as the civil magistrate has no authority in spiritual things . . . it is not within his province . . . to endow the church from national resources."

CHAPTER VII

Thomas Babington Macaulay—Betrothal of Queen Victoria—Duel between Mr. Horsman and Mr. Bradshaw—Debate on Prince Albert's annuity—Marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert—Defeat of the Government and dissolution—Melbourne resigns and Peel succeeds—The memorable Budget of 1842—Revival of the income-tax—War with China—Capture of Chusan—Bombardment of the Bogue Forts—Peace concluded by the Treaty of Nankin—The Afghan War—British invasion of Afghanistan—Renewal of insurrection—Murder of Sir A. Burnes and others—Murder of Sir W. Macnaghten and Capt. Trevor—Retreat from Cabul—Lord Ellenborough appointed Governor-General—Reconquest of Cabul—Sir Charles Napier—Conquest of Sind—Recall of Lord Ellenborough—First Sikh War—Battle of Moodkee—Battle of Ferozeshah—Battle of Aliwal—Battle of Sobraon—Subjugation of the Punjab.

THE Melbourne Ministry was crumbling slowly to its doom, though the Cabinet had been reinforced in 1839 by the accession of Macaulay as Secretary for War. He had spent four years in India as a member of the Supreme Council and president of the commission for preparing a criminal code for India,[1] re-entering Parliament on his return as member for Edinburgh. He began his *History of England* in 1839, and Greville quotes him as declaring that he wished he could destroy all he had written down to that time, for he thought "his time had been thrown away upon *opuscula* unworthy of his talents." Proof, herein, how untrustworthy is a man's estimate of his own work; for one Englishman who remembers Macaulay the minister or Macaulay the historian, there are thousands who have profited by the *opuscula*—the essays and lays. Greville himself, in recording this of Macaulay, unconsciously illustrates the same point. Speculating what Macaulay might have done "if he had wasted his time and frittered away his intellect as I have done mine," he proceeds: "If I had been carefully trained and subjected to moral discipline, I might have acted a

Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800-59.

[1] The code was published in the report of the commission in 1837, but did not become law till 1860.

creditable and useful part." In which case, sir, you would have been indistinguishable by this time in the crowd of mediocrities, and we should have been deprived of that diary which is your no inconsiderable monument!

On 23rd November 1839 the Queen assembled her Privy Council at Buckingham Palace (about eighty Councillors present) to make known her intention to marry her cousin, Prince Albert, second son of Ernest, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfield, a young man of her own age, remarkably good-looking, accomplished, and well read. He was known to have steered a steady course through the peculiar temptations besetting a youth of princely rank and fortune; yet was he no mere erudite prig, having a charming manner in society, a useful head for business; being, besides, an excellent horseman and an adept in field sports—no small recommendation to an English public.[1]

Betrothal of Queen Victoria, Nov. 1839.

Nevertheless, Prince Albert had to live down a good deal of prejudice—more than can be easily realised in a generation familiar only with the existing relations between Crown and people. Censorious opinions had been freely circulated concerning the Queen herself, her exclusive reliance upon Lord Melbourne and her known antipathy to the Conservatives having prepared the ground for a rank crop of ill-natured gossip.[2]

The Queen, however, was not without her champions. On the day after the opening of Parliament, Mr. Horsman, Whig member for Cockermouth, fought a duel with Mr. Bradshaw, who had spoken disrespectfully of her Majesty

[1] Greville's statement (2nd Part, vol. i. 247) that the Queen kept Melbourne in the dark about her intentions is groundless. On 15th October 1839 she wrote to the King of the Belgians: "Lord Melbourne, whom I of course have consulted about the whole affair, quite approves my choice, and expresses great satisfaction at the event, which he thinks in every way desirable" (*Queen Victoria's Letters*, i. 189).

[2] "The Tories really are very astonishing; as they cannot and dare not attack us in Parliament, they do everything they can to be personally rude to me. . . . The Whigs are the only safe and loyal people, and the Radicals will also rally round their Queen to protect her from the Tories; but it is a curious sight to see those who, as Tories, used to pique themselves upon their excessive loyalty, doing everything they can to degrade their young Sovereign in the eyes of the people. Of course there are exceptions." (*Queen Victoria to Prince Albert*, 21st January 1840.)

in a speech delivered in that town, wherefore Horsman had declared he had the tongue of a traitor and the heart of a coward. After an exchange of shots, Bradshaw was induced to retract and apologise.[1]

Duel between Mr. Horsman and Mr. Bradshaw, 17th Jan. 1840.

The Queen opened Parliament in person on 16th January 1840, making formal announcement in the speech from the throne of her betrothal to Prince Albert. In the debate on the Address the Duke of Wellington moved the only amendment in the House of Lords, namely, to insert the word "Protestant" before the Prince's name, in accordance with the Act of Settlement. This was agreed to without a division; but proceedings were not so harmonious in the House of Commons. When Lord John Russell asked for a grant of £50,000 a year to the Queen's Consort, Colonel Sibthorp moved an amendment from the Conservative benches reducing the figure to £30,000, which was known to be the annuity recommended to her Majesty by Melbourne.[2] Conservatives and Radicals, voting together for the amendment, carried it against Ministers by a majority of 104.

Debate on Prince Albert's annuity, 1840.

The Queen's marriage took place in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on 10th February. Meanwhile the Opposition leaders were in frequent consultation as to how and when the *coup-de-grâce* should be given to the Administration.[3] This was deferred till the following year, owing to dissension among Conservatives about the Canada Bill. Francis Baring,[4] having succeeded Spring Rice at the Treasury in 1839, had to face his second deficit of two millions in 1841, which he proposed to do by readjusting the differential duties on foreign and colonial timber and sugar. The House

Marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, 10th Feb. 1840.

[1] Greville, pt. ii., i. 254. One of the earliest objects for which Prince Albert exerted himself after his naturalisation was the suppression of duelling, for which he proposed to substitute Courts of Honour. His influence prevailed to put an end to the duel, but he could not persuade the Commander-in-Chief to establish the substitute.

[2] *Peel Letters*, ii. 432.

[3] Ibid., pp. 415–422.

[4] Created Lord Northbrook in 1866.

rejected the motion, after eight nights' debate, by a majority of 36, and the Cabinet decided to appeal to the country;[1] but before doing so Russell would make a last desperate bid for popularity by taking the sense of the House upon a resolution of which he had given notice before the budget debate, the effect being to substitute a fixed duty on wheat of 8s. a quarter for the sliding scale which had been in force since 1828. Hitherto Russell and his colleagues had been as strenuously opposed as any Tory to the projects of the Anti-Corn-Law League, which had been founded in Manchester in 1837. Melbourne only gave his consent to the resolution "doubtingly and despondingly";[2] but Lansdowne, Palmerston, and Russell overruled their leader, perceiving how the free-trade leaven was working in the north. Sheer party tactics, these; "the cheap loaf" being a fine hustings cry; but the move failed, as party tactics almost invariably do, being so transparent.

Russell's resolution was set down for 4th June; Peel cut in with a motion of want of confidence on 27th May, and carried it by a majority of one vote—312 to 311. Melbourne was for resigning at once, but his colleagues, sanguine of the result of their tactics, persuaded him to dissolve. It was a grievous miscalculation. London led off by unseating two of the four City members, Russell managing to retain his seat with a majority of only seven over a third Conservative. Macaulay, Morpeth, and Howick were among those rejected; even Dan O'Connell was beaten in Dublin, and in the first trial of strength in the new Parliament, Ministers, having counted a majority of 25 to 30 in the old one, were left in a minority of 91.[3] All that the Liberals gained by holding on to office was the Parthian satisfaction of inserting in the Queen's speech a bitter legacy for their successors in the shape of a paragraph unfavourable to the Corn Laws. Brougham, "the banished lord,"

Defeat of the Government and dissolution, 5th June 1841.

[1] *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 208.

[2] Torrens's *Melbourne*, ii. 358.

[3] The victory would have been even more sweeping but for the dissatisfaction caused in Scotland by Peel's refusal to pledge himself in support of the Duke of Argyll's Bill dealing with the dispute in the Established Church of that country.

as H. B.[1] named him, seized the occasion of the debate on the address to inflict a parting castigation upon the Government that had ventured to exist without him.

Upon the Melbourne Ministry resigning, the Queen laid her commands on Sir Robert Peel. Melbourne has earned grateful remembrance for his fatherly guidance of the youthful Sovereign during the first four years of her reign, but the very fulness with which he had risen to that occasion raised difficulties of a peculiar kind in the path of his successor. In letters addressed to Queen Victoria at this time there are numerous expressions of condolence as if for the loss of some near and dear relative. The Queen wrote about the political crisis which had deprived her of her guide and counsellor as "my present heavy trial, the heaviest I have ever had to endure."[2] When she was told that Peel would probably propose an increase to Prince Albert's annuity, she replied that "she would never allow such a thing to be proposed, and that it would be a disgrace to owe any favour to that party." All this was natural enough at the moment, but the situation became serious when Melbourne continued to advise her Majesty, to be closeted with her frequently, and to carry on a secret correspondence with her. Prince Albert understood constitutional practice well enough to feel considerable uneasiness; his difficulty was enhanced by the Queen's condition,[3] as well, let it be said, by her very definite views as to her own prerogative. The Prince, having consulted Baron Stockmar, sent his private secretary, George Anson, to remonstrate with Melbourne,[4] pointing out that in common fairness to Peel he must desist from addressing the Queen confidentially. Melbourne swore roundly, *more suo*, admitted that the rebuke was just,

Melbourne resigns and Peel succeeds, Aug. 1841.

[1] John Doyle (1797–1868), the first to redeem English caricature from the grossness of the school of Gillray and Rowlandson. He chose to mask his authorship of his well-known series of lithographs by writing his own initials twice $\frac{HD}{HD}$, which people read as "H. B." Croker, in commenting on the fall of the Melbourne Ministry, observed: "The *Times* and H. B. have done it all!"

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, i. 298.

[3] The Prince of Wales was born on 9th November of this year.

[4] Anson had been Melbourne's confidential secretary for many years, until the Prince's marriage.

but matters went on in much the same fashion after the Queen's accouchement, and Peel told Stockmar plainly that unless there were a change "he would throw up, whatever the consequences of his resignation might be."[1] Stockmar then took Melbourne in hand himself, using very plain language indeed. "Would you have it said that Sir Robert Peel failed in his trial, merely because the Queen alone was not fair to him, and that principally you had aided her in the game of dishonesty? And can you hope that this game can be played with security, even for a short time only, when a person has means of looking into your cards whom you yourself have described to me some years ago as a most passionate, giddy, imprudent, and dangerous woman?"[2]

After that, although the Queen's friendship for Melbourne continued unabated till his death in 1848, their correspondence contained less and less of politics.

Peel's correspondence illustrates graphically the difficulty of cabinet-making, owing to disappointed aspirations. Disraeli wrote complaining of the "intolerable humiliation" of not being recognised, and his wife supplemented his appeal in heart-rending terms. "My husband's political career is for ever crushed if you do not appreciate him. Literature he has abandoned for politics. . . . They will tell you at Maidstone that more than £40,000 was spent through my influence alone."[3]

It is fair to speculate what might have been the effect upon Disraeli's future if Peel had secured him as an ally through the coming troubled years. Nay, one may go further and ask whether if Gladstone had been left among the unemployed, instead of receiving a subordinate post outside the Cabinet, these two future protagonists might not have exchanged parts, Gladstone having entered

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, i. 361.

[2] Ibid., 362. The person referred to is the Hon. Mrs. Norton, the beautiful daughter of Thomas Sheridan. She was not on good terms with her husband, who brought an unsuccessful action of crim. con. against Lord Melbourne, with whom she was on terms of intimate friendship. The evidence against Melbourne was so trifling that it was commonly supposed that Norton's real object was to bring the Prime Minister into disgrace. Mrs. Norton married Sir William Stirling Maxwell in 1877.

[3] *Peel Letters*, ii. 487.

public life as a high Tory, and Disraeli having supported the Chartist petition in 1839! Or would you have one to dissociate the principles of any politician entirely from his private vicissitudes?

The most formidable difficulty before the new Ministry was the financial one. Six years of Whig management had brought about the prospect of an accumulated deficit of £10,000,000 in the budget of 1842. Peel met the difficulty by producing the most sensational budget of the century.[1] Returned to power as the defender of the sliding corn duty against Russell's fixed tax, he proposed a considerable reduction in that duty; head of the Protectionist party, he announced that the import duties on seven hundred and fifty out of twelve hundred articles would be lowered; finally, he staggered constitutional propriety by the unheard-of device of imposing an income-tax in time of peace. The very breath of such innovations blew the Duke of Buckingham out of the Cabinet. He resigned the Privy Seal before the meeting of Parliament; well if his loss had been all that was in store for Peel and his party. Buckingham was replaced by Buccleuch, a stronger man and a greater figure in agricultural concerns; the party, as a whole, supported their leader, so far, in the House of Commons.

The Budget of 1842.

Peel's scheme modified the sliding scale of 1828 by reducing the maximum duty of 27s. a quarter when the price of wheat did not exceed 60s. to a maximum of 20s. when it did not exceed 51s., the minimum duty remaining the same, namely, 1s. when the price rose above 73s. If the change was not enough greatly to alarm country members, it certainly was too little to satisfy the Anti-Corn-Law League, who cursed Peel as a *faineant* and burnt him in effigy. In the House of Commons, Russell opposed it with all his force, moving to substitute a fixed duty of 8s.; but the amendment was rejected by a majority of 106. Cobden had recourse to persistent obstruction, but Peel's generalship carried the day, and the first breach in the

[1] Of course Goulburn, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was responsible for the financial proposals, but if the budget was technically Goulburn's, the policy was essentially Peel's.

policy of protection was wrought by the forces behind a Conservative leader.

The feeling excited by the proposal to impose an income-tax was far stronger than might be understood by a later generation, long inured to the burden. As a peace tax it was unprecedented, and the necessity for every individual to declare his exact income made it peculiarly unpopular. Russell opposed the tax on the ground that Peel was grossly exaggerating the financial difficulties of the country; Baring, late Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Macaulay followed in the same line, but Radical Roebuck congratulated Peel on his boldness in having recourse to direct, instead of indirect, taxation, thereby letting people know in a straightforward way exactly what they would have to pay. After four nights' debate, Russell's amendment was rejected by a majority of 98. The tax was fixed for five years at 7d. in the pound on all incomes of £150 and upward. Property in Ireland was exempted from the tax, except that of such absentees from that country "who had no call of public duty to fix them in England." The equivalent quota from Ireland was raised by equalising the duty on spirits and the stamp duties with those of England and Scotland. It was estimated that the sevenpenny income-tax would produce £3,771,000, but it largely exceeded Peel's expectation by yielding £5,387,455 in the first year of collection.

Revival of the income-tax, 1842.

At this point we must leave Peel and his colleagues to enjoy a buoyant revenue and a still united following, and take some note of events on the eastern confines of the Empire.

In addition to a deficit of ten millions, the Conservative Government inherited from their predecessors a legacy of two wars. The first of these was the ultimate phase of a dispute between British traders in Canton and the Chinese Government. From the seventeenth century onwards the East India Company had possessed a monopoly of the Chinese trade; but on the expiry of the Company's charter in 1834 the monopoly was not renewed, the Chinese trade was thrown open to all

War with China, 1839–42.

British ships, and Lord Napier was sent out to Canton as chief commissioner to look after British interests. On the pretext, well enough founded from their point of view, that indispensable etiquette had not been observed, the Mandarins refused to recognise or negotiate with Napier, insulted his flag, and opened fire from crazy batteries upon the King's ships escorting him. In reply the ports were promptly battered to pieces, an argument so unanswerable that the Mandarins allowed Napier to land at Macao, which he did only to die a few days later.[1]

In justice to the Chinese authorities it must be allowed that they had received, and continued to receive, much provocation by the contraband traffic in opium, a drug whereof they had strictly prohibited the importation. No doubt that in doing so they had in view, not the moral and physical welfare of their own people, but the protection of their native opium industry from foreign competition. This they had a perfect right to do, but their manner of doing it punished honest traders as heavily as smugglers. Complaints made to the British Foreign Office received little attention for some time; at last Palmerston sent word to Captain Elliot, British agent in Canton, that "her Majesty's Government could not interfere for the purpose of enabling British subjects to violate the laws of the country with which they traded." Pretty obvious that, but not very helpful amid increasing difficulties, and the time came when Elliot had to act on his own responsibility. Early in 1839 the Imperial Commissioner had arrived in Canton, ordered the surrender of every ounce of opium in foreign ships in the harbour and roads, and demanded that all should submit to a bond decreeing death to anybody found in future in possession of foreign opium. As earnest of his purpose, he caused a native smuggler to be strangled in the square before the British factories, and blockaded the merchants' quarters with a large body of troops. Captain Elliot, fearing that a massacre of the whole foreign community was imminent, applied to the Viceroy of India for some warships, and called upon British traders to give up all opium in their possession to Commissioner Lin.

[1] 11th October 1834.

This was done at once to the amount of more than 20,000 chests; but affairs went from bad to worse, ending in a conflict between the Queen's frigates *Volage* and *Hyacinth* and a fleet of twenty-nine war-junks. Three junks were sunk, one was blown up, and the rest hauled off in a more or less dilapidated condition.

The Mandarins having now decreed the destruction of all the British merchant shipping at Canton and prepared a quantity of fire-rafts for the purpose, the quarrel had reached a stage when it could only be settled by an appeal to arms. A strong squadron, consisting of the *Melville* (74), some frigates, gunboats, and transports, assembled at Singapore;[1] but before Admiral Elliot arrived to take command, Commodore Sir J. Gordon Bremer captured the island of Chusan on 5th July, with its capital, a walled city six miles in circumference. Negotiations for peace were then opened, but the Mandarins purposely prolonged them while busily erecting batteries at the Bogue near Canton, so Bremer broke off and prepared for action. The Bogue forts were bombarded and two of them captured on 7th January; more parleying without result; renewed bombardment on 19th February, when the whole defensive works were occupied by the British. Every successive engagement was followed by attempts at a pacific settlement; but the Chinamen always interpreted forbearance as a sign of weakness on the part of the "foreign devils." Not until the troops under Sir Hugh Gough had fought their way to the walls of Canton did the Mandarins agree to the terms of truce offered them, just forty-five minutes before the hour fixed for a general attack.

Capture of Chusan, 5th July 1840.

Bombardment of the Bogue forts, Jan.-Feb. 1841.

Once more the negotiations were broken off, owing to the Mandarins refusing to fulfil the conditions of the truce; hostilities were resumed; Chusan was reoccupied; Amoy, defended by five hundred guns and reputed by the Chinese to be impregnable, was taken by assault, the capture of Chinghai and Ningpo followed. By the 9th August,

[1] This appears to be the first instance of the employment of steamships in war. The squadron included three, one armed steamer of the East India Company and two steamers (probably despatch-boats) of the Royal Navy.

when the British squadron cast anchor off the city of Nankin, the Mandarins had realised the futility of opposing their antiquated weapons to western armaments, and now sued for peace in earnest. A treaty of peace was concluded on 26th August among the conditions being an indemnity of 21,000,000 dollars to be paid by the Chinese Government, the cession of the island of Hongkong to the British Crown, and the opening of five principal Chinese ports to British commerce.

Peace concluded by the Treaty of Nankin, 26th Aug. 1842.

Thus ended one of the most causeless contests in which Great Britain has ever been engaged. In deciding how far Lord Palmerston must be held responsible for not anticipating and averting it, slow and imperfect means of communication should not be left out of account.

The other war which it fell to Peel's lot to bring to a close involved a most serious reverse to British policy and a crushing disaster to British arms.

The Afghan War, 1839-1842.

In 1837 Captain Alexander Burnes, Orientalist and traveller, arrived as British agent at Cabul, capital of the province of that name, in the north of Afghanistan. The ruler of that segment of the ancient empire of Ahmed Shah was Dost Mahomed Khan—an usurper, it is true, but a popular hero, a soldier of remarkable ability, and a bold and sagacious ruler. Dost professed the friendliest feelings towards England, but, for some reasons not now apparent, he was profoundly distrusted by British and Indian statesmen. Captain Burnes had no doubts of his integrity, but never could convince his employers that, in his disputes with neighbouring States, Dost much preferred to rely on British influence rather than meet the advances continually made to him by Russian and Persian emissaries. Burnes was instructed to regard Dost Mahomed as dangerously treacherous, and at last, in 1839, Lord Auckland, Governor-General of India, made a treaty with Runjit Singh, chief of the Punjab, for the purpose of restoring Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk, whom Dost had deposed. The ostensible reason for this was that Dost had attacked our ancient

British invasion of Afghanistan, 1839.

ally Runjit, who would be sure to retaliate, thereby throwing Dost into alliance with either Persia or Russia. The army with which Auckland prepared to effect his object had to fight its way through Sind, reducing the Amirs of that province to submission before crossing the Indus. In their further progress the troops suffered greatly from severe weather, famine, and the harassing assaults of the Beloochees. In fact, they were only saved from annihilation by the disunion and disputes of the native tribes. On 26th April the Bengal division entered Candahar, and the aged Shah Soojah, whom nobody wanted, was solemnly crowned on 8th May. But Dost was by no means done with yet. For a year and a half he waged mountain war, inflicting many reverses upon British detachments. At last, on 2nd November 1840, Sir Robert Sale defeated him at Purwandurrah; Dost's army broke up, and Dost himself rode into Cabul the following morning to hand his sword to the British envoy, Sir William Macnaghten, in token of submission. Macnaghten immediately restored the sword to the gallant foe, who was sent under strong escort to Hindostan, and was afterwards allotted a princely residence and a yearly pension of 3 lacs of rupees (£30,000).

Having disposed of the trouble, Macnaghten prepared to assume the governorship of Bombay which had been conferred upon him—fitting reward for a successful diplomatist. Aye, but the end was not even in sight; the British rulers of India, had they known it, were only at the beginning of the blackest chapter of the calamity. Dost, indeed, had made terms for himself, and had written to his three sons, commanding bodies of tribesmen in different parts of the mountains, bidding them do the like. But though the chief had fallen, the cause was not dead. Dost was the darling of his people, who hated the decrepit Soojah. Dost's second son, Akbar Khan, put himself at the head of a fresh revolt. Captain, now Sir Alexander, Burnes was the first victim, for although, in truth, he had from the first been a warm advocate for Dost, he remained the representative of the British who had overthrown that prince, and the Afghans believed that Burnes had betrayed him. The

Renewal of the insurrection, 1841.

Ghilzies, a warlike and powerful tribe, had hitherto adhered to the British nominee, Shah Soojah; but an unfortunate blunder committed by Major Lynch, political agent, in storming one of their forts and killing a popular chief, brought out in revolt the whole of this dangerous sept.

In the autumn of 1842, Shah Soojah held his court in Bala Hissar, the royal fortress in the city of Cabul. Outside the city, on the north side, lay a British force of 4500 troops and 12,000 camp servants and followers, beyond whose cantonment was the Mission Compound, occupied by Macnaghten and his suite. General Elphinstone, commanding in chief, was not without experience of war, having fought at Waterloo; but his health had broken down, and some months previously he had written to the Governor-General requesting to be relieved of a command for which he felt unfit. There was delay—deplorable if unavoidable, culpable if otherwise—in appointing General Nott to replace him; all the more reason for promptitude here, seeing that Brigadier Shelton, second in command, was sluggish and resourceless.[1]

Murder of Sir A. Burnes and others, 2nd Nov. 1841.

Most terribly was poor Elphinstone's misgiving about his own capacity justified when the insurrection broke out on 2nd November 1841, anniversary of Dost's defeat at Purwandurrah. It was inaugurated by the murder of Sir A. Burnes, his brother, and Lieutenant Broadfoot within the city, and the investment of Elphinstone's cantonment by swarms of Afghans. By unpardonable neglect of the most ordinary military precaution, the British commissariat was housed in an old and untenable fort at some distance outside the lines. This was quickly seized by the enemy; supplies ran short, and before the end of the month Elphinstone informed Macnaghten he must make the best terms he could with Akbar Khan. On 11th December the bargain was struck—instant evacuation of Cabul; no British soldier ever again to set foot in Afghanistan without invitation;

[1] Lady Sale's *Journal*, p. 3 *et passim*. Shelton had served in the Walcheren expedition, and lost an arm at the siege of San Sebastian. He was tried by court-martial for the Cabul affair and honourably acquitted. It was not his fault that he was too old for the job.

release of Dost Mahomet and all other Afghans detained in British territory, and payment of a heavy indemnity.

Surrender, this, only short of abject and unconditional in that the British troops were to be allowed to march off with the honours of war; but what was the saving clause worth? The army could not move until the Afghans chose to supply transport camels; they took care not to do so till the first snow should block the passes, which took place on 18th December. On the 22nd Akbar Khan reopened negotiations with Macnaghten, promising more favourable terms. Accompanied by three officers and an escort of ten men, the Envoy rode out on the 23rd to hold conference with Akbar on the west bank of the Cabul river. It was a solitary place; but no sooner had the conference opened than a crowd of armed Afghans gathered round. Objection being raised by the British officers to such an audience, Macnaghten and those with him were violently seized, and Akbar, drawing a pistol which the Envoy himself had given him, shot him through the body. Falling from his horse, Macnaghten was instantly hewn to death, Captain Trevor being slain at the same time, and the other two officers were taken into the city.

Murder of Sir W. Macnaghten and Captain Trevor, 23rd Dec. 1841.

Deeper grows the horror—darker the shame—as the story proceeds. Macnaghten's mangled remains were paraded through the streets of Cabul, yet not an arm was raised to avenge him. Oh for one hour of glorious Clive! What are Elphinstone's 4000 bayonets there for? Spirit of Sabut Jung![1] What has not been accomplished upon Indian battlefields with half such a force?

Elphinstone, sick in mind and body, is ready enough, poor fellow, to give Brigadier Shelton a free hand; but Shelton is—devoid of ambition, let us say; at councils of war rolling himself in a blanket to keep off draughts, and sleeping, or making-believe to sleep. What wonder, then, that the troops, ill-fed, ill-led, and dispirited by a score of worst-

[1] Sabut Jung, "the daring in war," the title won by Clive from the natives of Hindustan. At Plassey, with 1100 Europeans, 2100 native troops, and ten field-pieces, he routed Souraj-ud-Doolah's army of 50,000 foot, 18,000 cavalry, and 53 heavy guns.

ings at the hands of these swift Afghan fighters, have but one object in view—to get back to Hindustan?[1]

Let the rest of this shameful story be told as briefly as possible. On 6th January the British force was allowed to march out of their cantonment, leaving all their guns except six, all their treasure, and six officers (including Brigadier Shelton) as hostages. They set out, more than 16,000 souls, to traverse the stupendous passes to Jellalabad in the very depth of winter. Akbar Khan's safe-conduct proved the shadow of a shade.

The retreat from Cabul, 6th Jan. 1842.

"When the rear-guard left cantonments, they were fired upon from the cantonment then filled with Afghans. The servants . . . all threw away their loads and ran off. Private baggage, commissariat, and ammunition were nearly annihilated at one fell swoop. The whole road was covered with men, women, and children, lying down in the snow to die."[2]

Hordes of Ghilzies hovered along the route—shooting, stabbing, and mutilating the wretched fugitives. Akbar, indeed, rode with Elphinstone; probably it was true, as he declared, that he could do nothing with his handful of horse to keep off the infuriated hillmen.

At last it became evident that a choice must be made of a few who might be saved either from a bloody death or from perishing by cold. Akbar proposed to take all the women and children into his own custody and convey them to Peshawur. Lady Macnaghten was placed in charge of the assassin of her husband; with her went Lady Sale, Mrs. Trevor, and eight other Englishwomen; and, as an extreme favour, a few married men were allowed to accompany their wives. General Elphinstone allowed himself to be taken, with two other officers, as hostages. Deserted by its commander and the second in command, the column struggled forward to its doom in the Jugdulluck Pass. Then came the end. The hillsides were crowded with fierce mountaineers; the 44th Regiment, ordered to the front, mutinied, threatened to shoot their officers, broke their ranks, and were cut down in detail. A general

[1] Lady Sale's *Journal*, p. 4 *et passim*.

[2] Ibid., p. 225.

massacre followed. Of 16,500 persons who marched out of Cabul cantonments, a sorry score were all that left that deadly defile alive. Sixteen miles from Jellalabad, only six remained; still the murderous knife was plied, until at last one solitary, haggard man, Dr. William Brydon, rode into Jellalabad to announce the total annihilation of the army of Cabul, and to inform General Sale, commanding in that place, that his wife was in the hands of Akbar Khan.

It had been part of Elphinstone's shameful bargain with Akbar that Jellalabad and Candahar were to be evacuated before the Cabul column should reach the first named of these towns, and orders had been sent to Generals Sale and Nott to abandon them. But English generals were not all Elphinstones; they disobeyed orders. Akbar besieged Sale in Jellalabad; Sale not only held that place, but gave battle to the Afghans outside it, routed them, and made ready to co-operate with Nott at Candahar for a forward movement on Cabul. But the magnitude of the disaster of Jugdulluck had stricken Lord Auckland as with a palsy. Heedless of British prestige, at once the foundation and keystone of our rule in India, he ordered the precipitate recall of all the troops in Afghanistan. A stroke of good fortune averted that crowning disgrace. Auckland's term of office was at an end, and Peel had to choose a successor to him, which he found in the person of Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control.[1] He and Peel had formed the same opinion about the unwisdom of Auckland's invasion of Afghanistan to set a puppet on the throne of that "buffer State." "I fear," wrote Peel to Ellenborough on 26th March 1842 (before the news of the disaster had reached England), "the possibility of a terrible

Lord Ellenborough appointed Governor-General, Oct. 1841.

[1] British India was still under titular rule of the directors of the East India Company, and continued so until the abolition of the Company and establishment of the India Office in 1858. All patronage was in the hands of the directors, except the appointment of Governor-General and two or three other officials, but their acts were subject to revision by the Board of Control, consisting of members of the Cabinet. The Governor-General, while bound to carry out the policy of the Board of Control, was also responsible to the Board of Directors.

retribution for the most absurd and insane project that was ever undertaken in the wantonness of power."[1]

Ellenborough, who had just turned fifty, was a remarkable, in some respects a brilliant, man. He was an elegant, if not a convincing, speaker, and his regard for theatrical effect and a wide social horizon seemed to mark him out as a fitting representative of the Crown in a sphere where ceremony and pageant count for so much. The only misgiving Peel and Wellington felt about him was that he might prove too precipitate in action and too autocratic in rule. Their doubts proved to be well founded. Arriving in India towards the end of February 1842, Ellenborough heard for the first time of the fate of the Cabul column. He wrote to Peel brave words about "re-establishing the honour of our arms in Afghanistan";[2] six weeks later he issued peremptory orders for the immediate evacuation of that country, leaving the captives to their fate. Generals Pollock and Nott, having already had the hardihood to disobey Auckland's order to retire, found an excuse in the season for disregarding Ellenborough's, who described them to Peel as being without "a grain of military talent."[3] Meanwhile the Governor-General had got to loggerheads with the Civil Service, owing to his precipitate dismissal of some who hesitated about carrying out his commands and his contemptuous disregard of the opinion of others. "When men find that there will be a Government as long as I remain here, they will begin to aid me instead of trying to thwart me."[4] It seemed as if Ellenborough were going to aggravate the confusion created by Auckland; but Peel would not hear of abandoning the British captives.

"Apart from any sentimental feeling—which, however, I by no means abjure—I think we should incur risk of material loss—loss of reputation and of honour, which constitute strength and make our name formidable—by abandoning, without one effort consistent with common prudence, those who are held captive by perfidious savages."[5]

[1] *Peel Letters*, ii. 580. [2] Ibid., 581. [3] Ibid., 588.

[4] Ellenborough to Peel, 7th June 1842.

[5] Peel to Lord Fitzgerald, 11th Sept. 1842. Fitzgerald had succeeded Ellenborough as President of the Board of Control.

Before these lines were written, Ellenborough had been fully apprised of the determination of the Cabinet to rescue the captives,[1] and had revoked in July the order for evacuation. The reconquest of Cabul was accomplished by the entry of General Pollock into the capital on 15th September 1842, when it was found that luckless Shah Soojah had paid the penalty of the greatness thrust upon him by British diplomats, and had been assassinated by the people he had been set to rule.

Reconquest of Cabul, 15th Sept. 1842.

Of the English women and children left with Akbar Khan, the story, and that of the whole series of events at Cabul, has been admirably told by the heroic wife of Sir Robert Sale.[2] They were rescued, together with the male hostages, from the Indian Caucasus on 17th September by Sir Robert Shakespear and 600 Kuzzilbash horse, who easily bribed the chief in charge to surrender his trust.

It is recorded that the egregious Brigadier Shelton, one of the captives, was much offended because Shakespear did not on arrival formally report himself to him as senior officer! By that time Elphinstone the Unfit had gone to his account, flitting, a feeble shade, from the page of Indian history.

The Imperial honour having been vindicated by the reconquest of Cabul, and retribution exacted for the murder of Burnes, Macnaghten and the rest by the destruction of the great bazaar in the capital, the British forces immediately evacuated Afghanistan, Dost Mahomed was released from exile, and returned as ruler to his own country. The sole results of Lord Auckland's attempt to force a sovereign upon a reluctant nation had been four years of needless, and therefore iniquitous, war, the sacrifice of thousands of lives, and the sowing of bitter memories among a people with whom it was of the first importance to the rulers of India to be on cordial terms. It very soon became evident that Ellenborough was not the right husbandman to deal with the crop springing from that seed.

When Lord Auckland undertook the ill-advised, ill-starred invasion of Afghanistan, there lay in the direct line

[1] *Peel Letters*, iii. 4.

[2] *A Journal of the Disasters in Afghanistan*, by Lady Sale, 1843.

of march of his army the independent territory of Sind, covering a tract of 100,000 square miles lying along both banks of the lower Indus, the native race being governed and oppressed by ten Amirs, heirs of the four Baluch chiefs who conquered the country in the eighteenth century. The neutrality of this splendid region had been strictly guaranteed by treaty in 1832; and the Amirs were perfectly in their right in objecting, as they did, to its violation by the entry of Sir John Keane's troops in 1838; but, under menace of his guns, they had another treaty forced upon them, stipulating for the permanent presence of a British force in Sind and for the payment by the Amirs of a tribute of £35,000 annually towards its expenses. The Amirs gave no further trouble during the Cabul campaign; in fact, Lord Auckland thanked them publicly for services rendered to his army, which might have induced Lord Ellenborough, when he assumed the government in 1842, to overlook considerable arrears which had accumulated in the tribute. That was not his view. He would remit the tribute, but insist on the perpetual cession of the seaport of Kurrachee and four other towns to the British Government. Major James Outram (whose name will be heard of in future) was political agent in Hyderabad; it was owing to his tact and temper that the Amirs had submitted so quietly hitherto. He protested strongly against the Governor-General's punitive and aggressive policy;[1] whereupon Ellenborough superseded him by sending Sir Charles Napier with 12,000 troops to Kurrachee. "I have given instructions to Sir Charles Napier which he thinks he can execute without the use of force. I do not. . . . If there should be resistance, I will exact a severe penalty."[2]

Sir Charles Napier, 1782–1853.

A splendid fighter, this Sir Charles, like the whole brood of Napiers, but hardly could choice have been made of one with less qualification for a political agent. Read in his journal how, from the very first, he had no other dream or purpose but conquest.

[1] The second article of the treaty of 1832 bound the two contracting Powers "never to look with the eye of covetousness on the possessions of each other."

[2] Ellenborough to Peel, 15th Nov. 1842. The instructions to Napier are printed in the *Annual Register*, 1843, p. 350.

Embarking gleefully on the Indus on 24th September—"Thirty years ago, in Bermuda, I read Arrian last, was delighted, and wished to have been with Alexander: now I command an English army on the Indus. What shall I be—what see—what feel thirty years hence? Greater than here, my hope and belief is; perhaps Alexander himself may be my companion!"[1] A month later—"We have no right to seize Scinde, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be."[2]

At first the Amirs gave Napier no excuse for the chastisement he was instructed to inflict upon them if recalcitrant. Overawed by his formidable force, they submitted to Ellenborough's fresh exactions; but it was scarcely in human, much less in fiery Baluch, nature to refuse the first promising opportunity of throwing off the yoke. The annihilation of Elphinstone's army fired the war party to fresh activity. Outram, discredited by his own Government, lost influence with the Amirs. He was in the residency at Hyderabad with a garrison of only 100 men of the 22nd Regiment and 30 sepoys. On 15th February 1843 one of the Amirs attacked him with 8000 men and six guns.[3] After making a gallant defence for four hours, Outram, having expended all his ammunition, managed to embark his little force safely on a steamer in the Indus.[4] Next day Napier marched to Muttari with a force of 2800, with which on the 17th he attacked the Baluch army of 36,000 at Miáni, routing it and capturing all the artillery and baggage, besides considerable treasure.[5] Hyderabad was occupied on the 20th,

Conquest of Sind, 1843.

[1] *Life of Sir C. Napier*, ii. 195. [2] Ibid., 218.

[3] Napier had already blown up the fort of Emaumghur.

[4] Sir Charles Napier and his brother and biographer Sir William blamed Outram in no measured terms for his faith in the Amirs. "Bedlam, not the Residency, should have been his destination" (*Life of Sir C. Napier*, ii. 221 *et passim*). Outram's previous services should have been warrant against such headlong censure. When the Mutiny broke out in 1857 he was recalled from Persia to Calcutta by the summons, "We want all our best men here"; and he rests in Westminster Abbey under a slab engraved, "The Bayard of India."

[5] Sir W. Napier says the action was fought with only 1800 troops, whereof only 400 were Europeans (*Life of Sir C. Napier*, ii. 334).

and all the Amirs were now in hand except Mir Shire Mahommed, the "Lion of Mirpur," who remained in the field till 24th March, when Napier completely defeated him and brought the war to a close. On 31st March letters arrived from the Governor-General, appointing Napier Governor of Sind, which was henceforth incorporated in British India.

But not without much hesitation on the part of the Cabinet. Peel felt the gravest doubts about the justice of Ellenborough's dealings with the Amirs.[1] The Court of Directors, also, were terrified by the Napoleonic policy of the Governor-General, and unanimously demanded his recall. Gladly would Peel have re-established the rule of the Amirs and withdrawn from Sind altogether; but he felt that "distance from the scene of action, lapse of time, the bearing and practical results of accomplished facts, must materially fetter the discretion of the Executive Government here";[2] nor did Ellenborough's despatches afford much material for decision. They had driven Fitzgerald to offer his resignation as President of the Board of Control. When Fitzgerald died, in April 1843, and was succeeded by Lord Ripon, Ellenborough told Peel that Ripon did not know his business,[3] and renewed his complaints about want of support by the Cabinet. At the same time he clamoured to be made Commander-in-Chief as well as Governor-General.[4] It was not until November 1843, after receiving from Ellenborough a well-reasoned public despatch defending the policy of annexation, that the Cabinet decided to sanction it and to face the storm of disapproval which awaited them on the meeting of Parliament. The rule of the Amirs, who themselves were of alien race to the unwarlike Sindians, had been oppressive and wasteful; to restore it after the machinery of government had been broken up and its resources impoverished by invasion and conquest, would have been to hand the nation over to misery far worse than it had been before; so the decree was issued—*vestigia nulla retrorsum.*

There remained the dilemma of dual control. The

[1] *Peel Letters*, iii. 7, 17, 18, 19.
[2] Ibid., p. 18.
[3] Ibid., p. 20.
[4] Ibid., p. 20.

Cabinet had resolved to support the Governor-General, and expostulated with the Court of Directors, who remained inflexible in demanding his recall. Nay, in carrying it into effect; for, strange to say, although the appointment of the Governor-General was vested in the Cabinet, the Court of Directors had power to cancel it; which they did in April 1844, and Sir Henry Hardinge was appointed in place of Ellenborough. If anything were wanted to strengthen and justify the apprehensions of the Court of Directors, it was supplied in a letter to Hardinge written by Ellenborough, which arrived after his recall had been decided on, but written by him before he knew it was impending.

Recall of Lord Ellenborough, May 1844.

"In four months I shall have 275,000 in arms. I think I could cross the Sutlej with rather more than 33,000 infantry, 7000 cavalry, and in all 162 guns. [Here follows a great scheme of conquest.] . . . I think you will at once see that, supposing this operation of two years to be successfully completed, we have under our foot, whenever the state of Europe may permit us to take it, that country which has ever been the ultimate object of my desires, but of which I hardly dare whisper the name—Egypt. Perhaps I may have seen in a vision something beyond this. But this is enough for the present."[1]

Readers will harbour no regret that the projector of such perilous schemes was brought back to the matter-of-fact atmosphere of the West.

The course of events in India during the administration of Sir Henry Hardinge[2] may be briefly sketched here before returning to consideration of home affairs.

Hardinge's purpose was the peaceful development of British India by the extension of railways, but his hand was forced at the close of 1845, and his Government were compelled to embark afresh upon the work of conquest.

First Sikh War, 1845–46.

The Punjab, a kingdom consisting partly of independent Sikh states and partly of others under British protection, was under nominal rule of Dhuleep Singh, the son of Runjit Singh, the firm ally of the British who died in

[1] *Peel Letters*, iii. 30.

[2] He was created Viscount Hardinge in 1846.

1839. Dhuleep was still a minor in 1845; authority was in the hands of Lall Singh, favourite of the Maharanee, but the government at Lahore was distracted by faction and lay at the mercy of the powerful native army. To keep that army out of mischief at home, Lall Singh began massing troops on the British frontier in December, and crossed the Sutlej on the 13th of that month, 15,000 or 20,000 strong. Sir Hugh Gough coming forward by forced marches to meet them, his advanced guard was attacked at Mudkí on the 18th. A general engagement took place, ending in the Sikhs being driven off the field with heavy slaughter and the loss of fifteen guns. Among the British officers killed was Sir Robert Sale, upon whose defence of Jellalabad in 1842 the whole future of the Queen's government of India had been saved. The Sikhs retired a few miles to a strongly entrenched camp at Firóz-shahr, where Gough, reinforced by Sir John Littler's division from Firóz-púr, attacked them on the 21st. The Sikhs also had been reinforced, their army now numbering 50,000 men, with 108 guns in fixed batteries. Gough, with whom was the Governor-General as second in command, only mustered 16,700 men with 69 guns, chiefly horse and field artillery. The action was one of the most severe in Indian history, beginning at 4 P.M. on the 21st, and ending in the afternoon of the 22nd with the complete defeat of the enemy, who lost seventy guns and was driven back across the Sutlej.

Battle of Mudkí, 18th Dec. 1845.

Battle of Firóz-shahr, 21st–22nd Dec. 1845.

Early in January 1846 the invasion was renewed by Sirdar Runjoor Singh taking up a strong position on the British side of the Sutlej, threatening Gough's communications with Loodiana. On 28th January Sir Harry Smith attacked the Sikhs at Aliwál, capturing their camp and fifty guns. Despite these repeated heavy reverses, the Sikhs, indomitable and disciplined fighters, still kept a bold front. Thirty thousand of their best troops lay at Sobráon, within a triple line of breastworks flanked by redoubts and armed with seventy guns, awaiting attack by Sir Hugh Gough. The British

Battle of Aliwál, 28th Jan. 1846.

guns opened fire at 8 o'clock on the morning of 10th February; at 9 o'clock Brigadier Stacey led four battalions to the assault, and being well supported, carried the place by storm. By 11 o'clock the enemy was in full flight across the Sutlej, leaving 67 guns, 20 camel swivels, and all his baggage and ammunition. In the British loss of 320 killed there were seventeen officers, including General Sir Robert Dick, General M'Laren, and Brigadier Taylor. The wounded numbered 139 officers and 1924 men; but the carnage among the gallant Sikhs was far more terrible. It is supposed that 8000 or 10,000 of them perished in action or were drowned in crossing the river under the fire of Gough's artillery. On 22nd February the Governor-General, who was present in these actions as a volunteer acting as second in command, issued a proclamation of Lahore, whereby Dhuleep Singh was established as Maharájá, tributary to the British Government, and the tract between the Sutlej and the Rávi, being about one-third of the Punjab, was annexed to the Company's dominion.

Battle of Sobráon, 10th Feb. 1846.

Subjugation of the Punjab, 22nd Feb. 1846.

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CHAPTER VIII

O'Connell's "Year of Repeal"—Charles Gavan Duffy and the *Nation*—The Clontarf meeting—Collapse of the Repeal movement—Prosecution of O'Connell and others—Death of Daniel O'Connell—The nature of Irish grievances—Peel's Irish policy—The Maynooth grant—Establishment of Queen's Colleges—Tenants' Compensation (Ireland) Bill—The potato disease—The Edinburgh letter—Peel resigns—and resumes office—Rupture of the Conservative Party—Action of the Protectionists—Passage of the Corn Bill—The Duke of Wellington saves the Bill—Defeat and resignation of the Government.

THE life of the Melbourne Ministry had been prolonged far beyond expectation by means of O'Connell's patronage and powerful support; but Whigs and Radicals had to pay heavily at the polls for an alliance so deeply distrusted by English and Scottish electors. Even in Ireland it seemed in 1841 as if the emancipation of Roman Catholics in 1829 and the subsequent Tithes and Municipal Corporation Acts had done something in reconciling the people to the Act of Union. O'Connell, indeed, easily found a seat in Cork instead of the one whence he had been ejected in Dublin; but of the "tail" of five-and-forty Repealers who obeyed his nod in the 1834 Parliament, a bare dozen survived the elections of 1841. Even O'Connell, with all his fervid oratory and inflammatory vituperation, failed to attract audiences in Ireland on the scale of former years, those who did gather to hear him did not respond in the old manner; there were unmistakable signs of flagging popularity. Doubts have been expressed whether his heart was in the Repeal movement at this time, or, indeed, wholly at any time. Despite the late Mr. Lecky's earnest assurance that "nothing could be more untrue" than such a suggestion, it is certain that he refrained from pressing for repeal in season and out of season; showing thereby that he considered it a question secondary in importance, or at least in urgency, to religious emancipation. Had O'Connell been spared the indignity so gratui-

O'Connell's "Year of Repeal," 1843.

tously put upon him in 1829 by the refusal of the House of Commons to read the Relief Act as retrospective, he might never have been goaded to the coarse vituperation with which he regaled country meetings, and which irremediably incensed English opinion against him. Even had he refrained from spurning Lord Grey as leader of "the base, bloody, and brutal Whigs," he would scarcely have conciliated that party by holding up the venerable Duke of Wellington to the scorn of Irish peasants as a "stunted corporal," or by reviling Disraeli to his face as "the lineal descendant of the impenitent thief." It is not improbable that, had he not clouded his renown by these and many similar indecencies, high place would have been found for him in the first Melbourne administration, where, as a genuine patriot intent upon redressing the real wrongs of his country, his experience, knowledge of the subject, brilliant natural powers, and statesmanlike capacity would have been invaluable to his colleagues in their efforts to remove them. He had always felt, and often expressed, a horror of revolutionary methods, of which he had seen enough to disgust him as a student at the English College at Douay. The leaders of Irish rebellion—Fitzgerald, Tone, Emmett, and the rest of those whom present-day Repealers venerate as martyrs—O'Connell classed together as "a gang of miscreants." He had used the Repeal movement as a lever for the genuine object of his life—Catholic emancipation; when, by his own prowess, that prize had been won, resentment against those who withheld from him, on a legal quibble, immediate enjoyment thereof sent him on the war-path again, and he resumed his place at the head of the Repeal party. But in accordance with the Lichfield House compact he allowed the movement to slumber from 1834 to 1841. In 1835, when Melbourne formed his Government, O'Connell gave it his steady support, and spoke in public of his wish "to try how far England could legislate for Ireland in a manner that would content the people." This was interpreted as expressing willingness to take office with the Whigs. "I own," wrote Lord Holland to Melbourne, "I should think the Minister who neglected such an opportunity of spiking so vast an instrument of

mischief and annoyance both foolish and culpable."[1] There can be little doubt that Lord Mulgrave, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, led O'Connell to expect the Irish Attorney-Generalship, and that the Irish leader was greatly disappointed when Edward Ellice waited upon him to explain that Mulgrave's offer had been made without authority, and that the prejudice he had created against himself, both within and without the Ministry, was too great to be overcome.[2]

If O'Connell had dropped Repeal in 1835, Repeal appeared to have dropped him in 1841.

He was in his sixty-sixth year, with energy and ability unimpaired, it is true, but with enthusiasm and confidence tempered by twelve years' experience of the Imperial Parliament. It was another than he who rekindled the torch and sent it flying from hand to hand. In 1842 a young journalist named Charles Gavan Duffy associated himself with two or three eager spirits of like age in starting a weekly newspaper called the *Nation*. Their scheme was to rouse the people to a sense of their wrongs, real and imaginary, without hampering scruples as to the means adopted to get them redressed. The response was immediate and amazing. It took the practical form of increasing the repeal rent—in other words, the subscription to the Repeal Association—at one bound from £60 a week to £300. O'Connell, perceiving his opportunity and probably desiring to restrain the movement within constitutional limits, resumed his place at its head, declared that 1843 should be the Year of Repeal, and held monster meetings, at which, if they consisted of no more than half the incredible numbers reported as attending, not one patriot in fifty can have heard even the trumpet tones of the demagogue.[3] Hearing or not, the effect upon the multitude was prodigious. The repeal rent rose from £680 a week in May to £2200 in June. During Melbourne's administration it had never exceeded a weekly average of £100. In the last nine months of 1843

Charles Gavan Duffy and the *Nation*, 1842.

[1] *Melbourne Papers*, p. 233.

[2] Torrens's *Melbourne*, ii. 126.

[3] It was solemnly asserted that 100,000 persons attended a meeting at Mallow in May, and 500,000 one at Mullingar in June.

it amounted to £48,000. Besides this drain upon a populace supposed to be in the throes of abject poverty, there was the O'Connell tribute, collected twice a year at every Roman Catholic chapel, to indemnify the leader for the loss of his lucrative practice at the Bar. In 1843 this tribute amounted to £20,000.

It had been O'Connell's steady purpose from early years to destroy the territorial influence of landlords, and to substitute for them as leaders the Roman Catholic clergy, who, until the turning-point of the Clare election in 1829, had kept scrupulously aloof from politics. Now, in 1843, they were in the very forefront of agitation, every parish priest acting as a Repeal agent and collecting funds from his flock. O'Connell had also made it his business to accentuate the antipathy of Celt and Saxon and render it permanent. Here, then, were the two most virulent leavens of discord—the racial and the religious—set to work among the most excitable people on earth. Where was it all to end?

Despite O'Connell's genuine aversion for revolution, once the "Young Ireland" men had forced him to the front again, his speech was embittered and his purpose hardened by sheer contrast of his standing in Ireland as "the uncrowned king" and his position in London as the *enfant terrible* of the Whigs and a dishonoured outcast from the Court and society. The spirit he roused among his people was impelling them directly through sedition to civil war. "Matters are looking so serious, that delay or temporising will be ruin. The rapid spread of the Repeal agitation and the burst of audacity which has broken out within this very short time, are astounding."[1]

Just then Sugden, Irish Lord Chancellor, greatly embarrassed the Government and embittered the Repealers by dismissing O'Connell, and about thirty other magistrates who had attended his meetings, from the Commission of the Peace, and by most indiscreetly announcing the Queen's determination to prevent the repeal of the Union. Half-a-dozen Whig magistrates marked their indignation by resigning, and Sugden, having received gentle, but firm

[1] Lord de Grey (Lord-Lieutenant) to Peel, 6th May 1843.

rebuke from Peel, had the sense not to insist upon the dismissals. After all, there was nothing contrary to law in holding meetings or in advocating Repeal as a policy; and the Government did nothing to interfere with the proceedings of the Association throughout that summer. At the same time, they had the prudence to bring the military forces in Ireland up to 35,000, and to pass an Arms Act—necessary precautions in face of the warlike organisation of the Repealers. The Government received full approval and support for their forbearance from the Whig leaders, but the Radicals opposed the Arms Act by all the known methods of obstruction. "Extraordinary folly," exclaims Sir Spencer Walpole, that Ministers should revive and adapt this measure to altered circumstances. "Folly" is the phrase which flowed most readily from Sir Spencer's pen in recording the acts of Conservative statesmen; but in this case Peel was only bringing out and furbishing a weapon forged by his Whig predecessors. Aye, but, explains this exponent of history as read through Liberal spectacles, "it was one thing to place such a measure in the hands of Melbourne and Normanby; it was another to entrust it to Peel and de Grey."[1]

In short—

> "That in the captain's but a choleric word,
> Which in the soldier is rank blasphemy."

In the Arms Act Sir Spencer Walpole recognised the hand, not of O'Connell's "base, brutal, and bloody Whigs," who were its real authors, but that of the tyrannical Tories.

"The Ministry had not proposed an Arms Bill for England in 1842; it was not proposing an Arms Bill for Wales in 1843. Why were the old expedients of tyranny to be reserved for Ireland alone? . . . The Union could be defended if Celt and Saxon were governed by the same principles. The Union became, as O'Connell called it, a living lie, if one law was in force in England and another law thought good enough for Ireland."[2]

[1] Walpole's *England*, iv. 230. This much-abused Arms Act was not, after all, a very tyrannical affair. No man was to be allowed to possess or sell arms or gunpowder without a licence granted on the recommendation of two householders. Licensed arms were to be branded, and the police were empowered to search for and seize unbranded arms.

[2] Ibid., 231.

It were easy to manufacture wrongs at this rate, provided the different relative proportions of the forces of order and those of disorder in the two countries are left out of account.

The summer of 1843 passed without an appeal to force, but no Government worthy of the name could take the risk of long winter nights with tens of thousands of men perpetually marching through the country in military formation. Moreover, it was notorious that the Young Ireland party, to use a national colloquialism, were "spoiling for a fight." O'Connell, whatever his private sentiments might be, did nothing to discourage the belief that, at the right moment, he would lead them to battle. He had no objection to this prospect taking due effect upon the councils of Ministers.

Collapse of the Repeal movement, Oct. 1843.

Matters had been allowed to go as far as they could with safety, when suddenly, on 7th October, a proclamation was issued from Dublin Castle prohibiting a monster meeting which O'Connell was to address on the morrow at historic Clontarf. Small regard would the people have paid to any edict of the Lord-Lieutenant; but O'Connell shrank from the responsibility of what would most surely have occurred had the meeting proceeded. Troops and police were on the ground to enforce the proclamation; they could not have dispersed the crowd without bloodshed, and the Uncrowned King would have none of that. He issued a proclamation of his own, ordering the masses, already streaming in from the country, to disperse, and announcing that, in consequence of the Lord-Lieutenant's commands, the meeting would not be held.

O'Connell's word was still law to the people, who dispersed quietly; but, as they did so, his authority fell from him, as it must do from every demagogue who attempts to limit the action of forces which he has called into being. Many a man has raised the whirlwind, but none has ever prevailed to direct the storm. "Young Ireland" beheld betrayal in the forbearance of their leader; henceforward there were two parties of Repeal—the moderate or constitutional party, and the party of physical force.

O'Connell, Gavan Duffy, and a number of the most active agitators were arraigned on a charge of sedition. To conduct such a prosecution in Ireland was to ensure a travesty of justice. The prisoners were all Roman Catholics, and no juryman of that religion could be trusted to give his verdict according to the evidence. Accordingly the Government prosecutor successfully objected to every Catholic whose name was called from the list. A jury of Protestants was empanelled to try the disciple of Rome who, by his own act, had brought about the emancipation of Roman Catholics. Could anything be more deplorable? anything less likely to reconcile Irish Catholics to Protestant rule? Yet what was the alternative? A State trial with a foregone verdict of acquittal, a proceeding in which no sane Minister would acquiesce. The accused were all convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment,[1] and the case was appealed to the House of Lords on a writ of error. At that time there was no distinction between the legislative and judicial prerogatives of the Upper Chamber; every peer being entitled to vote on the issue of trials. There was a general disposition among the unprofessional peers to exercise their privilege on this occasion; had they done so, the verdict of the Irish Court must have been confirmed by a party vote. That calamity was averted by the wise intervention of Lord Wharncliffe, who succeeded at the last moment in dissuading the lords from taking upon themselves so grave a responsibility in a matter with which they were not qualified by legal training to deal. When the question was put, all the peers present withdrew from the House except the five law lords, Cottenham, Denman, Campbell, Lyndhurst, and Brougham. By the votes of the first three against the other two, the appeal on the technical point was sustained, and O'Connell and his associates went free.

Prosecution of O'Connell and others, 1844.

Yes, O'Connell was free once more, but by his own act he had broken the spell which bound the Irish people to his nod. He had followers still, but they were occupied

[1] O'Connell was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of £2000.

in wrangling with the Forwards, who would never forgive the surrender of Clontarf. In Ireland he was no longer the uncrowned king; he was discrowned, and he did not long survive his fall. His last appearance in Parliament was in 1846; the voice which once had thrilled thousands on the green hillsides was now barely audible across the green benches of the House of Commons, so feeble were the accents, so bowed the massive frame. In the following spring he set out for Rome, intending to end his stormy life at the very fount of its inspiration; but strength failed him at Genoa, and there the old lion lay down to rise no more. While his numerous enemies, as Mr. J. R. Thursfield has aptly expressed it, could not but admit his great qualities, assigning him the degree of "a demagogue with some of the gifts of a statesman," his English panegyrists claim for him "the standing of a statesman with some of the vices of a demagogue."[1]

Death of Daniel O'Connell, 15th May 1847.

Before closing the page upon this phase of Irish disaffection, it may be serviceable to weigh the grievances which lay at its root, as well as at that of many subsequent phases. What were the peculiar wrongs of the Irish people, and in what respects were they worse treated by the Westminster Parliament than the people of Scotland, where the union of Parliaments had been resisted quite as vigorously as in Ireland. What justification had Smith O'Brien for telling the House of Commons that the cry for repeal was not the cry of treason but the cry of despair?

The nature of Irish grievances.

There was, of course, the offence of an Established Church, which four-fifths of the nation were instructed by their spiritual teachers to abhor; but the tithes for its maintenance had been commuted to a rent charge upon landlords, most of whom professed the Protestant faith. In Scotland, on the other hand, most of the landowners, having been educated in England, belonged to the Episcopal Church, but, as heritors, bore the whole charge of the Established Presbyterian Church, the church of the people;

[1] *Peel*, by J. R. Thursfield, p. 206.

from which, in this very year 1843, there had been a vast secession without any civil disturbance whatever.

There was the grievance of the almost exclusive appointment of Protestants to important offices in Ireland, a monopoly formerly secured to them by law, but one which Peel, recognising its injustice, earnestly and eloquently exhorted the Lord-Lieutenant to put an end to.[1] He desired that religion should be no bar to the promotion of a lawyer or civil servant to the highest branches of the professions; but some years had yet to run before this purpose could be carried out, owing to the fact that, until the disabilities had been removed, it was not worth while for any Roman Catholic youths to undergo training for the public service. In this respect the Irish people still remained, at that time, at a notable disadvantage compared to Scotland.

Lastly, there was the grievance of absenteeism. Undoubtedly this is an evil in whatever part of the United Kingdom it is allowed to prevail; but the extent to which it prevailed in Ireland has been greatly exaggerated. Unquestionably many of those owning large tracts of Irish soil never went near their estates, and spent the proceeds thereof in England; but will those who remember Irish country society fifty years ago deny that the great majority of landowners were constantly resident, hospitable to a fault, and lavish in expenditure? Scotland suffered—suffers now—from too many absentees, so strong is the magnet of London as the centre of politics, the hive of intellect and science, the universal mart of pleasure and fashion. Scottish lairds of the Dalgarno type have never been very rare, yet Scottish farmers have gone about their business from generation to generation without any tendency to "a cry of despair." Aye, but it may be said, how different is the Scottish system under which farms are equipped by the landlord with houses, fences, roads, &c., from the Irish practice which leaves the tenant to execute these necessaries for himself. True; but it is precisely those districts in

[1] See especially Peel's letters to Lord de Grey, 22nd Aug. 1843, and to Sir J. Graham, 31st Aug., wherein he enters at great length upon the necessity for abolishing all preference on religious grounds (*Peel Letters*, iii. 56–62).

Ireland where Scottish methods of improvement have been most successfully applied—the large farms in the rich pastures of Meath and Kildare—that the agitator points out as the most glaring examples of injustice.

Too much has been laid at the door of Irish absentees. Upon certain great Irish estates inherited and held by English peers, whom it would be invidious to name and who are prevented by legislative and other duties from residing in Ireland, the condition of the tenantry was and is certainly not inferior to that of the tenants of resident proprietors.

The real evils of Irish land tenure and the hardships of the Irish peasant farmers must be assigned to a common source—over population. In a hundred years the people had multiplied fourfold. Their number was reckoned at about 2,000,000 in 1731; it had risen to 8,500,000 in 1841. There were no minerals in Ireland to relieve the congestion—no coal-mines and ironworks, with their dependent industries—as there were in England and Scotland; the cultivation of potatoes had made it possible to gain bare subsistence from smaller plots of land than could be had with cereals, and upon the land, their sole resource, the peasantry swarmed, subdividing it, fighting for it, almost starving on it in bad seasons, and were taught to lay the whole blame for their sufferings upon the Union. The competition for land was a constant temptation to inconsiderate, greedy, or needy landlords to exact exorbitant rents and to confiscate improvements to which they had contributed nothing. Evictions, ruthlessly carried out on a few estates, far outweighed the lenient treatment accorded to tenants upon others. Unhappily, leniency usually took the form of permitting rents to fall in arrear, which often led in the end to the same result—eviction.

But that the sufferings of the Irish peasantry, in normal times at least, were neither so universal nor so overwhelming as they have been painted, is proved by the immense sums which it was possible to extract from the people for political purposes (£68,000, as mentioned above, in the year 1843). That the "cry of despair" was so loud and heart-rending must receive a different explanation—one to which

those charged with the government of Ireland should ever give its due weight. It is found in the racial temperament of the Celt. Just as among beasts of the chase there are some, like deer and foxes, that suffer and die mutely, and others, like hares, that proclaim their anguish or terror by excruciating cries, so there are races of men who behave differently in adversity. The hare of the plains is not a whit more timid than the deer of the mountain, nor is the Celt less gallant and enduring than the Saxon; but he is naturally more emotional and eloquent, the Saxon being characteristically stolid and reserved. The Celt gives free expression to the emotion of the moment, be it pleasurable or the reverse; the Saxon's instinct is to conceal his feelings. Add to this characteristic the superior readiness of Celtic peoples to yield implicitly to the guidance of a strong and impetuous leader, and the frequency, as well as the violence, of Irish agitation becomes an intelligible phenomenon.

Peel's Irish policy, 1844–45.

The collapse of the Repeal agitation did not tempt Peel to dismiss the needs of Ireland from a foremost place in his legislative projects. Lord de Grey, as Lord-Lieutenant since 1841, had shown firmness and discretion in dealing with disorderly mobs, but had proved a hindrance rather than a help to a policy of impartiality towards the members of the two hostile churches. He retired at his own request in the summer of 1844, and was succeeded by Lord Heytesbury, a diplomatist who had been appointed Governor-General of India in 1835, but was superseded in the same year by Lord Auckland, in consequence of the change of Government. Meanwhile O'Connell and the Repeal press had recast their demands in a new form. Federalism was now the cry, more familiar to modern ears as Home Rule—an Irish Parliament for exclusively Irish affairs.

"The absurdity of Federalism might be exposed," wrote Peel to Heytesbury, "demonstrating the necessity which it would ultimately engender for the retrocession to barbarism—for retracing the steps by which the independent legislation for parts of a great Empire has been abolished, and one supreme authority substituted for conflicting authorities with separate interests and local

prejudices. If Ireland must have Federalism, so must Scotland. Why not Wales? Why not Wessex? and the kingdoms of the Heptarchy?"[1]

The objections urged against Home Rule during the sixty years since these sentences were penned have found utterance in acres of print and oceans of talk, but they have amounted to no more than amplification of Peel's plain common sense. But Peel was by no means disposed to content himself with a merely negative policy.

"I do not despair," he wrote to Lord Heytesbury, "of weaning from the cause of Repeal the great body of wealthy and intelligent Roman Catholics, by the steady manifestation of a desire to act with impartiality and to do that which is just. . . . We have to solve the problem of peaceably governing seven millions of people, and maintaining intact the Protestant Church Establishment for the religious instruction and consolation of one million."[2]

The first constructive and remedial measure for Ireland which Peel brought forward made a grievous breach in the allegiance of his party, already severely strained by the free trade character of his successive budgets.

The Maynooth grant, 1795–1869.

In 1795 the Irish Parliament, out-and-out Protestant as it was, had made a grant in aid to Maynooth College, founded for the education of Roman Catholic priests. The grant was continued after the Union by an annual vote, but the amount, £9000, was utterly insufficient to keep the buildings in decent repair, much less to pay the professors respectable salaries. Peel proposed to raise it to £26,000, to place it on the Consolidated Fund instead of on the Estimates, thereby avoiding the annual opportunity for religious wrangling in Committee, and to vote £30,000 to be expended on the college buildings. No new principle was involved in the Bill, merely the question whether Parliament, having fifty years before affirmed that the State should contribute to the education of Romish priests, should make that contribution effective for the purpose. But Protestants of all denominations took alarm; the land resounded with

[1] *Peel Letters*, iii. 122. [2] Ibid., 114.

invective of that peculiar acrimony with which Christians are wont to emphasise doctrinal differences with each other; thousands of petitions against the Bill poured in throughout the first half of April.[1]

The prospects of the Bill were so unfavourable that Peel told the Queen that it was expected that Ministers would be defeated on a motion preliminary to the second reading, providing that the funds required for Maynooth should be taken from the revenues of the Irish Established Church. A defeat on this amendment, he said, would not prevent him afterwards moving the second reading; but he was anxious not to remove the impression that it would do so, as it might "deter many of the friends of the Government from entering into the combination."[2]

This mild fraud was successful; the country party were not yet quite ripe for revolt, and the Maynooth Bill passed through all its stages by large majorities. The only price which Peel was called upon to pay at the moment was the loss of an able and eloquent colleague. Mr. Gladstone supported the measure with voice and vote, but as he considered State aid to Romish institutions inconsistent with principles he had enunciated in his work on *The State in its Relations with the Church*,[3] he resigned the Presidency of the Board of Trade in order, as he told Peel, that his action should be "free from all just suspicion."[4]

Simultaneously with the Maynooth Bill, which was framed to meet the spiritual needs of the Irish people, their secular education was provided for by a measure establishing three "Queen's Colleges," as they are called, in the north, south, and west of Ireland, wherein youths of all churches and sects should be educated impartially. This in-

Establishment of Queen's Colleges in Ireland, 1845.

[1] The number of separate petitions presented between 3rd and 18th April was 5585. The right of petitioning Parliament continues to be one of an Englishman's most cherished privileges, yet nothing can well be more devoid of effect. No important measure ever had its progress either accelerated or retarded by the presentation of petitions.

[2] *Peel Letters*, iii. 174.

[3] Published in 1838.

[4] *Peel Letters*, iii. 167. It was reserved for Mr. Gladstone to abolish the Maynooth grant by the Irish Church Act of 1869, a measure wholly irreconcilable with the principles maintained in his book above referred to.

volved an initial outlay of £100,000, and an annual grant of £7000. The Roman Catholic clergy, who had enthusiastically supported the Maynooth Bill, denounced the Academical Institutions Bill as godless and dangerous to morals; but English dissenters and Scottish Presbyterians, whose opposition had threatened to wreck both the Ministry and the Maynooth scheme, took no exception to the severance of religious from secular education effected by the second measure. Of his complete remedial scheme for Ireland Peel had accomplished the first instalment by his conduct of the Maynooth College Bill; Sir James Graham had achieved the second by his Academical Institutions Bill; there remained a third part to be settled by Lord Stanley's Bill dealing with land tenure on the lines of the report of Lord Devon's commission, appointed in 1843. It was designed to confer upon tenants an interest in improvements executed by themselves, and to secure them against eviction without compensation for the same. In the House of Lords the Bill received a second reading; but, having been referred to a select committee, it emerged at so late a period of the session that Stanley withdrew it, intending to bring it in again in the following year. Circumstances rendered him one of the foremost agents in frustrating that good intention.

Tenants' Compensation (Ireland) Bill, 1845.

After all, a Government which had successfully passed two out of three principal and highly contentious measures —a Minister who had converted the chronic deficit of Whig finance into an annually increasing surplus—might take its holiday with a reasonable sense of satisfaction and security. But that holiday was soon overcast and shortened by a grave calamity which no statesmanship could have averted—one of those visitations which remind one sharply from time to time that, pliant as physical forces have proved to human control, the most highly civilised communities remain ultimately at the mercy of some of the humblest organisms. In this instance, an obscure and microscopic fungus [1] was the agent that wrecked one of the most powerful and prosperous administrations

[1] *Phytophthora infestans.*

of the century, ruptured the dominant political party, and precipitated a reversal of the fiscal policy of the country.

The potato disease, 1845.

The blight was first noticed on the potato crop in the Isle of Wight in August 1845. Next it was found that nearly all the potatoes in southern England, France, and Holland were similarly affected, and by the middle of October the disease was general all over Ireland.

Favoured by the generous soil and mild climate of that island, the potato had become the staple resource of the Irish peasantry—as important to them as wheat was to the English labourer—more so than oatmeal still was to the Scots. In Great Britain the loss of the potato crop would mean serious loss to many farmers—ruin to a few; in Ireland it was synonymous with famine.

The first result was to bring into prominence the effect of the corn duties in restricting the importation of foodstuffs. The laws regulating the duties had been diligently sapped by Cobden, Villiers, and the Anti-Corn-Law League. Peel himself had mined the outworks of protection by his free-trade budgets of 1842 and 1845, and he was under no illusion as to the goal to which he was gradually leading his party. But he knew that if the pace were forced that party must inevitably fall into confusion.

"The one remedy," he wrote to Goulburn on 18th October, "will be the removal of impediments to the free import of those articles of which human food consists. . . . The temporary remission of all duties on corn is, in the present state of public feeling, tantamount to the permanent and total remission of those duties. Once remitted, they will never be re-established."[1]

Upon few passages in our history has light been so freely shed as upon the circumstances of the repeal of the Corn Laws. There are practically no points connected with it which remain in dispute, therefore a brief rehearsal of events will suffice in this place.

Peel abandons the corn duties, 31st Oct. 1845.

The Cabinet met at Peel's house on 31st October. The Prime Minister informed his colleagues that he considered it impossible to maintain the existing restrictions upon grain imports in the face of the impending scarcity in Ireland;

[1] *Peel Letters*, iii. 226.

he advised that Parliament should be summoned before Christmas, and he put before his colleagues the triple alternative of "determined maintenance, modification, and suspension of the existing Corn Laws," expressing his own opinion in favour of the last of the three courses.

The effect of this was to leave Peel with only three convinced supporters out of his thirteen colleagues, namely, Aberdeen, Graham, and Sidney Herbert. Wellington detested tampering with the corn duties, but "a good government for the country is more important than Corn Laws or any other consideration": Peel was the only man to ensure that, and the old Duke would see him through with it. Not so Stanley, invaluable in debate, nor Buccleuch, pillar of the country party; these two resigned on 2nd December.

While these events were pending and notoriously imminent, Lord John Russell perceived his opportunity and seized it. The scion of a great agricultural house, he had hitherto resisted repeal of the Corn Laws quite as resolutely as Peel.[1] The wet autumn of 1845 had caused a deficient harvest, raising the price of wheat to 64s. a quarter, when the duty upon foreign wheat sank under the sliding scale to 8s. Now this was the precise figure at which, in 1841, Russell had proposed to fix the duty irrespective of price. On 22nd November he issued a letter to his constituents denouncing the indecision and procrastination of the Government, and announcing his complete conversion to the principles of the Anti-Corn-Law League. "Had there been complete unanimity in the Cabinet," wrote Peel to Hardinge, "I should have been content to meet these new and greatly increased difficulties rather than retire."[2] But, deserted by two of his best trusted colleagues, he could only hope to carry his proposals against the majority of his party by the votes of the Opposition, so "the question would be much better in the hands of Lord John Russell than in mine."[3] On the 6th December he went to Osborne to ask the Queen to relieve him of office.

The Edinburgh letter, 22nd Nov. 1845.

[1] See his letter to Fox Maule in which he expresses regret at hearing of his "adhesion to the extreme views of the Anti-Corn-Law League"—29th Dec. 1842 (*Panmure Papers*, i. 24).

[2] *Peel Letters*, iii. 281. [3] Ibid.

As the majority in both Houses of Parliament was Conservative, the Queen suggested that it should be ascertained whether those members of the Cabinet who had retired were prepared to take over the administration.[1] When that was found to be out of the question (on 15th December) Russell undertook, on the 18th, to form a Government. But the Whigs could not agree among themselves. Russell offered Palmerston his old place at the Foreign Office. Said Lord Grey (son of the Premier of 1832) anything but that! If Palmerston goes to the Foreign Office, you must go on without me. The Foreign Office or nothing, quoth Palmerston; and between these stubborn lords Russell's cabinet-making fell to pieces. The Queen sent for Peel on 20th December, required him to withdraw his resignation and remain in her service. The Duke of Buccleuch repented and resumed office under his old leader; but Stanley remained obdurate, and was replaced by Mr. Gladstone, who re-entered the Cabinet as Colonial Secretary.

Peel resigns, 6th Dec. 1845.

And resumes office, 20th Dec.

The sky, so serene when Parliament separated in August, was dark and forbidding when it reassembled in January. The chill of schism was in the air. In hamlet and homestead, manorial hall and market-place, men were taking excited counsel how to thwart and bring to disgrace the Minister whom, five years before, they had hailed as their champion. He who had come to defend the citadel of agriculture was now throwing wide its gates to the enemy. Territorial lords were mustering the not inconsiderable forces left to them by the Reform Act. The Duke of Buckingham ousted Sir Thomas Fremantle, Chief Secretary for Ireland, from the borough of Buckingham. When Mr. Gladstone presented himself for re-election on accepting office, the ten-pound householders of Newark rejected him at the bidding of their feudal chief, the Duke of Newcastle. Nay, but this doughty Duke spared not his own son, Lord Lincoln, who, being

Rupture of the Conservative party, Jan. 1846.

[1] This suggestion originated with Russell and Lansdowne, who, let it be understood to their honour, were by no means eager for office, and Lansdowne was most strongly opposed to a dissolution (*Peel Letters*, iii. 246).



The Duke of Wellington & Sir Robert Peel.

from the painting by Winterhalter

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1910

appointed to the Irish Office instead of Fremantle, was dismissed by the electors of South Notts at the behest of his father. So another Minister, Lord Arthur Lennox, was turned out of Chichester by his brother, the Duke of Richmond, and the Duke of Marlborough successfully opposed the re-election of the Attorney-General, Sir Frederick Thesiger, for Woodstock. Other Conservative members, pledged to protection but willing to follow Peel, conscientiously resigned their seats to give their constituents a voice upon the change of policy. Some of these were replaced by Protectionists, others by Liberals. So far as the country could speak through by-elections, Peel stood condemned. With such auspices, what might he expect from the House of Lords?

But Peel never wavered.

"I meditate not a mere dealing with the Corn Laws, but the continued and more extensive application of those principles which governed the introduction of the Tariff in 1842"[1]

He had gained the complete confidence of the Queen and Prince Albert. Very different was the tone in which the Queen wrote about him from that of her letters in the old Melbourne days. She described to the King of the Belgians her "*extreme* admiration of our worthy Peel, who shows himself a man of unbounded *loyalty, courage*, patriotism, and *high-mindedness*, and his conduct towards me has been *chivalrous* almost. . . . I have never seen him so excited or so determined, and *such* a good cause must succeed." Some sentences which follow show how far her Majesty's feelings had altered towards her old Whig servants.[2]

A political party has much of the character of a family circle. Men accustomed to work together for common objects, organised for defence against a common foe, become bound together by ties so strong and obligations so sacred that the leader who determines upon a line of action that must offend and alienate a considerable section of his followers feels himself rent by emotions not less searching and painful than those experienced by one seceding from

[1] Peel to Lord Francis Egerton, 6th Jan. 1846 (*Peel Letters*, iii. 323).

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 64.

the church of his fathers. Internal dissension within a party lacks none of the peculiar bitterness of a family quarrel. Coolly counting the cost of his action, Peel told the Queen that he reckoned upon the support of only 123 Conservatives against 197 who would vote against him.[1]

The budget resolutions, as Peel had forewarned Lord Francis Egerton they would do, affected many articles besides food-stuffs. In 1842 the duties on raw material were remitted or modified to the advantage of British manufacturers. In 1846 a corresponding reduction was proposed on the protective duties which those manufacturers had hitherto enjoyed. The budget of 1842 had conferred a boon on manufacturers; they were now called upon to share the burden. But farmers had received no previous boon. They were told that in future they might expect to get feeding-stuffs and manures cheaper, and were asked in the present to consent to a reduction of 50 per cent. of the duties on dairy produce and hops, to the free admission of live-stock and meat, and to surrender the duty on corn as from 1st February 1849, when a registration fee of 1s. a quarter would take its place.

Action of the Protectionists, Jan. 1846.

To resist these proposals the Protectionists had found a leader in Lord George Bentinck, who, although he had sat in eight parliaments without taking any active part in debate, and although his whole energies seemed hitherto to have been absorbed in racing and field sports, found himself suddenly impelled by the strength of his convictions to overcome his intense personal distaste for public speaking. He carried the unbounded confidence of the country party, and displayed a mastery of the fiscal question in its complex details which surprised members in all parts of the House. What he lacked in fluency and pungency of invective was amply supplied by his lieutenant and future biographer, Benjamin Disraeli, who lashed the Minister mercilessly for his "sublime audacity" in abandoning the position entrusted to him for defence. He likened his conduct to that of the Sultan of Turkey's admiral who, when sent out to attack Mehemet Ali, steered his fleet straight into the enemy's

[1] *Peel Letters*, iii. 339.

port, and afterwards defended his treachery by explaining that he objected on principle to war and had brought it to an end by betraying his master.

Under these leaders the Protectionists fought as if at the last ditch. Invective has been exhausted in condemning their fidelity to election pledges—the stubbornness of their defence of the most ancient, and still the most considerable, industry in the country. They have been ridiculed as "the stupid party" because of their apprehensions for agriculture, from which, as it turned out, disaster was to be averted for thirty years by the enormous influx of gold from the new fields of California and Australasia. In the motives of those who declined to follow Peel in his change of front, most Liberal writers profess to detect nothing nobler than sordid selfishness, and to recognise in their speeches nothing but a repetition of "blunders from which they seemed hopelessly incapable of extricating themselves."[1]

In writing to the Queen, Peel had not overestimated the extent of the defection. Of the 337 members who voted in the majority in the first critical division on the corn duties, only 112 were Conservatives. On 20th March the last of the budget resolutions was agreed to, and leave was given to bring in the necessary Bills to carry them into effect. On 15th May the Corn Bill passed third reading by 327 votes to 229, and was sent up to the Lords. Its fate in that House lay in the hands of a single peer: how would he dispose of it? The situation is fully explained in the correspondence of the time. "I think," wrote Stanley

Passage of the Corn Bill, 15th May 1846.

[1] Walpole's *England*, iv. 284. This writer, after pouring contempt upon the Protectionists for their "unnecessary fears," observes that "men rarely resort to abuse till they find their other weapons inefficient or useless," and proceeds to emulate the objects of his wrath in the use of uncomplimentary terms. He admits that Bentinck had a broad mind, "but forty-four years of life had been insufficient to furnish it." Of Disraeli he says that "the man who habitually throws mud at another . . . is certain to sully his own fingers. Disraeli did not mind dirtying himself if he could only succeed in damaging his opponent" (ibid., 172). It is refreshing to turn from partisan declamation such as this to the calmer and more generous appraisement of these men by Mr. Justin M'Carthy (*History of Our Own Times*, vol. i. chap. xvi.).

to the Duke of Wellington, "it is very doubtful whether even your great name and influence will induce the Lords to sanction the Bill." The Duke urged Stanley to rally the Conservative party by relieving him of the leadership of the House of Lords.[1] Stanley replied: "I am forced to remind you that in the present state of affairs and feelings, they could only be rallied in opposition to measures of your own Government."[2] Again and again Wellington pressed him to assume the lead and to act on the principle he himself had always observed. "I have invariably supported the Government in Parliament upon important occasions, and have always exercised my personal influence to prevent the mischief of anything like a difference or division between the two Houses. . . . I don't despair of carrying the Bill through. You must be the best judge of the course which you ought to take, and of the course most likely to conciliate the House of Lords. My opinion is that you should advise the House to vote that which would lead most to publick order and would be most beneficial to the immediate interests of this country."[3]

The Duke of Wellington saves the Bill, 25th May 1846.

Far from yielding to Wellington's remonstrance, Lord Stanley led the opposition to the Corn Bill. Then was manifest, even in more striking manner than upon the Roman Catholic Relief Bill in 1829, the extraordinary ascendancy of the Iron Duke over his peers. He stood at the table on the second reading, a lean, bent figure, crowned with the snows of six-and-seventy winters, and spoke in accents broken—not with fear, for that was unknown to him—nor with emotion, for to that he had schooled himself never to yield—but with age and the faltering of an unready speaker.

"I am aware that I address your lordships with all your prejudices against me. . . . I never had any claim to the confidence that your lordships have placed in me. But I will not omit, even on this night—possibly the last on which I shall ever venture to address to you my advice—I will not omit to counsel you as to the vote you should

[1] Stanley had been made a peer in 1844 during his father's life.

[2] *Apsley House MSS.* [3] Ibid.

give on this occasion." He used a memorable argument, one by which hereditary legislators may most surely reconcile their functions at once with their own dignity and with the will of democratic colleagues in the elective chamber. Constitutionally, said the Duke, their lordships had no choice but to pass the Bill. A measure recommended by the Crown in the speech from the throne and sent up by the Commons must be accepted, because "without the House of Commons and the Crown, the House of Lords could do nothing."

It was past four o'clock on a summer morning when the division was taken, resulting in a majority of 47 for the second reading.

The victory of free trade was won, but Peel's most relentless foes were those of his own household, and they were not to be balked of vengeance. Distress in Ireland had borne its accustomed crop of cruel crime: concurrently with the measure of relief it had been necessary to introduce another of that long and dreary series of temporary repressive Bills to which one Government after another was forced to have recourse, until in 1887 Lord Salisbury had the resolution to pass a permanent Peace Preservation Act. Never was there more pressing occasion for such powers as were sought by the Bill than during the unhappy months of 1846, yet Russell and the Whigs combined with Bentinck, Disraeli, and the malcontent Conservatives to defeat the Bill. In the Whigs such tactics were pure faction; in the Tories they were revenge; the combination ensured their success. On the very day that the Corn Bill passed through its last stage in the House of Lords without a division, the Coercion Bill was thrown out of the House of Commons by a majority of 73, and Peel immediately resigned.

Defeat and resignation of the Government, 26th June 1846.

CHAPTER IX

Lord John Russell's first administration—Famine in the Highlands and Islands—The Irish famine—Encumbered Estates Act—General election—Financial crisis—Outbreak of crime in Ireland—Revolutions in Europe—The Chartists—Smith O'Brien and Widow Cormack's cabbages—Lord Palmerston—The Spanish marriages—Queen Victoria's displeasure with Palmerston—The affair of Don Pacifico—"Civis Romanus sum"—Death of Sir Robert Peel.

Lord John Russell's first administration, 1846–52.

In undertaking to govern the country with a minority in both Houses of Parliament, Lord John Russell was spared some of the disadvantages which must usually wreck such an enterprise. The rupture of the Opposition was complete; there was little to fear from their disorganised ranks. Peel himself made no attempt to rally his party, so hopelessly had it foundered. "I do not know how other men are constituted," he wrote to Lord Aberdeen on 14th August, "but I can say with truth that I find the day too short for my present occupations, which consist chiefly in lounging in my library, directing improvements, riding with the boys and my daughter,[1] and pitying Lord John and his colleagues." He wrote to the King of the Belgians (27th January 1847) of "the general disposition to merge party differences in a common effort to mitigate the calamity with which Ireland is afflicted, and lay the foundation for a better order of things in that country";[2] but this only represented the feeling of himself and his free-trade followers. The Protectionists had abated no whit of their vengeful feelings. "If we had any authority," wrote Croker in the *Quarterly Review*, "we should venture to insist that any one professing to adhere to Sir Robert Peel's present views should be opposed [at the polls] by every possible exertion, even to

[1] Eliza, who married the Hon. Francis Stonor in 1855.

[2] *Peel Letters*, iii. 479.

the extent of preferring either Whig or Radical as less dangerous than a pseudo-Conservative."[1]

Lord John invited Wellington to assist him in forming a coalition Ministry. Said the Duke, "Such arrangements are viewed with distrust by the public, are not creditable to the parties, and cannot be useful to any,"[2] but so long as he continued Commander-in-Chief he would never countenance opposition to the Queen's Government. An invitation to join the Cabinet was declined severally by Lord Dalhousie, Lord Lincoln, and Sidney Herbert, "on the double ground of public duty and private honour."[3] Russell, therefore, had to be content with a purely Whig Ministry, wherein Palmerston was Foreign Secretary, Charles Wood Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Macaulay Paymaster of the Forces by his own choice, "because he did not like to accept any office that would divert him from his literary work."[4] No matter how grave was the state of the country or how dark the prospect before his colleagues, he would act on Candide's maxim—*Il fallait cultiver son jardin!*

In truth the prospect was discouraging enough—full of gloom and menace at home and abroad. Famine—a visitation whereof the present generation, having had no experience, can hardly imagine the horror—famine held Ireland in its grip; and behind famine stalked its dread ancillary, fever. The potato disease, so general in 1845, was universal in 1846. Peel's Government had purchased large quantities of Indian corn to be retailed to the people at a penny a pound; £450,000 had been spent in relief works before they quitted office, and pecuniary succour had flowed in from almost every civilised country in the world, but still the death roll mounted up.

[1] *Quarterly Review*, No. 156. An article worth perusing at the present time. "It is by no means impossible," runs one passage, "or even improbable, that at no distant day a general stagnation and distress in the manufacturing districts may make the repeal of the Corn Laws, and what is called *Free Trade*, as unpopular in Manchester as in Chichester." Appositely enough, I lighted upon this passage for the first time to-day (3rd March 1909), when news has just arrived of a by-election in Central Glasgow, Mr. Scott Dickson, Tariff Reformer, having won the seat, previously held by a Liberal, by a majority of 2113 votes over Mr. Gibson Bowles, Liberal Free-trader.

[2] *Apsley House MSS.*

[3] *Peel Letters*, iii. 455.

[4] Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 242.

A similar calamity was decimating the Celts of the West Highlands and Islands. They, too, had come to rely on the potato as their surest crop; the blight fell as disastrously upon their little fields as it did elsewhere, and ruin overtook an industry which had maintained 40,000 or 50,000 of them. Come rain, come shine, the ocean never failed to load their shores with abundance of kelp, whence they extracted alkali by burning, a profitable process when alkali commanded prices from £10 to £20 a ton; but Peel struck off the duty on foreign alkali in 1845, thereby destroying the occupation of these poor people. Their sufferings in those dark years of famine were no whit less appalling than those of the Irish peasantry; but they were further off. A feeble and a scattered folk, unapt at outrage, unable to call attention to their woes by monster meetings, little or no external succour reached them; hundreds laid themselves quietly down to die.

Famine in the Highlands and Islands, 1846.

The Government concentrated their palliative efforts upon Ireland. In March 1847 there were 734,000 persons employed on relief works. Proper supervision of such a multitude was out of the question; no effective check could be made upon time-work; clearly, to continue such a system would be to pauperise the country permanently at the expense of British tax-payers. The Irish Poor Law of 1838 made no provision for outdoor relief; indoor relief was wholly inadequate to cope with the existing crisis; a remedy was sought by passing an Act authorising outdoor relief whenever the workhouse was full. This was to shift the burden from the Exchequer to the local rates; could the landowners of Ireland, mostly entailed and more than fifty per cent. of their total annual rental claimed by mortgagees, respond to the call? Clearly there must be many landowners who could not; so, to extricate limited proprietors from their dilemma, Parliament passed the Encumbered Estates Act, releasing insolvent landowners from the bonds of entail and enabling them to meet their liabilities by the sale of their estates. A wise and merciful measure, on the face of it; yet was it to prove the source of grievous trouble, whereof more hereafter.

The Irish famine, 1846–47.

Encumbered Estates Act, 1848.

Before these measures could take any effect the relief works were gradually stopped, and the plan was adopted of supplying the people with food, distributed by relief committees, and so supporting them until the harvest. Matters began to mend as the summer wore on, but Sir Charles Wood had to make provision for paying the bill—£8,000,000 of extraordinary expenditure, and that at a time when commercial affairs in England were fast verging to a crisis. With a general election imminent, he would be a Chancellor of no common hardihood who should propose increased taxation. Wood chose the cruder, but easier, course of meeting the deficit by a loan at 3½ per cent.

General Election, July 1847.

Parliament having been dissolved in July, there followed what is described in the *Annual Register* as the quietest election on record. Although there was little change in the balance of parties, the tendency was to bring Peelites into closer relation with Ministerial Whigs. The most notable figures to disappear were Macaulay, who lost his seat for Edinburgh as a punishment for refusing the behests of the Free Kirk party, and Roebuck, who received *congé* from his old constituents at Bath. On the whole, the country ratified the policy of free trade.

Circumstances made an autumn session imperative. On 23rd November the Queen's speech to the new Parliament referred to little except the prevailing commercial crisis and a fresh outbreak of savage outrage in Ireland.

Financial crisis, 1847.

The financial panic of 1847 has been described by so many hands, and so much unanimity prevails as to the causes which brought it about, that these may here be summed up in the single term—over-speculation. Cheap money in 1845 had induced people to borrow largely for investment, especially in railway stocks. At the close of that year the railway companies had raised, or were asking for powers to raise, the enormous amount of £700,000,000. The pinch came when large sums had to be sent abroad to purchase corn for Ireland. Up went the bank rate with a bound, and down went private credit with a crash. Stocks hitherto only to be had at premium became suddenly unsaleable; an abundant harvest lowered the price of wheat from 105s. in May 1847 to 53s. 2d. in September.

The failure of many great London firms involved the Governor and three other directors of the Bank of England in ruin; many private and joint-stock banks suspended payment; the panic spread to Glasgow, Manchester, and all other industrial centres, and Consols fell from 94 in January to 74 in October, Bank of England stock sinking in the same period from 207 to 181.

Peel's Bank Charter Act of 1844 had separated the issue department of the Bank of England from the banking department, limiting the issue of notes to the value of £14,000,000 in excess of the bullion in reserve. In October the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank waited upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to warn him that, unless the Bank were temporarily relieved from these restrictions, it must stop credit within four-and-twenty hours. Lord John Russell and Sir Charles Wood rose to the emergency; they signed a letter of license to the Bank to draw upon the currency reserve in order to restore the exhausted bank reserve, trusting to an Act of Indemnity should this lead to an infringement of the Bank Charter Act. The effect of this in restoring confidence was immediate. The panic subsided without the directors of the Bank being called upon to break the law.

Outbreak of crime in Ireland, autumn 1847.

The Irish imbroglio was not so simply overcome. No just complaint could be laid against the existing Government or its predecessor for lack of prompt energy in mitigating the sufferings of the people; nor will any one of experience in the Irish character doubt that gratitude for succour rendered warmed thousands of hearts towards England. But the curse of Ireland from earliest time has been the easy ascendancy obtained through terrorism by men of violence, and no sooner was the severity of famine relieved than the overt response to British bounty appeared in the shape of an outbreak of deadly, ruthless outrage, chiefly confined to the counties of Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary. The *Annual Register* for 1847 records deeds of almost incredible brutality, often committed in broad daylight before many witnesses. When Major Mahon was butchered on the high road outside his own demesne in Roscommon,

bonfires flared at night from all the neighbouring hills. He had received no rent for three years; his offence was trying to collect some of the arrears, which amounted to £30,000, and chartering at his own expense two vessels to carry some of his insolvent tenants to America. Even in the few cases where the assassins were captured, terrorised juries showed the usual dogged refusal to convict upon the clearest evidence. Coroners' juries, with grim levity, sometimes returned verdicts of wilful murder against the Prime Minister or the Lord-Lieutenant as the persons responsible for the disasters of the country.

In no particular does the history of English parties repeat itself with such clockwork regularity as in the government of Ireland, which the late Lord Morris described as the attempt of an honest and stupid people to govern a dishonest and quick-witted one. Liberal ministries, at the bidding of their "tail," divest themselves of special powers provided by their Conservative predecessors, and are compelled to resume them in order to maintain a semblance of rule. Even so it was in 1847. In the previous year Russell had overthrown Peel on the question of coercion, yet here he was asking Parliament for some of the very powers which he had induced it to withhold from his opponent. He obtained them without difficulty, for the news from certain parts of Ireland was appalling enough to secure for the Bill the support of many Radicals who had constantly voted against previous measures of coercism. A conciliatory measure—the kiss which invariably accompanies the kick in Irish legislation—was deferred till after Christmas. It was designed to check the frequency of eviction by giving the Irish tenant security for his improvements; but the year 1848 was one of almost universal revolt of European nations against their rulers, unfavourable therefore to remedial legislation.

Revolutions in Europe, 1848.

France led the way by forcing Louis Philippe to abdicate, and proclaiming the Republic; other countries following in rapid succession of revolution. The Spanish Government had only a Carlist insurrection to contend with, a chronic source of disquiet and bloodshed; but in Italy the people of

Lombardy rose in revolt against their Austrian masters; and the Pope, who declined either to encourage or aid the movement, had to escape in the disguise of a livery servant from the fury of the Roman populace, and seek refuge in the kingdom of Naples. While Austria was crushing the Italian rebellion with one hand and fighting her Hungarian subjects with the other, the populace of Vienna rose in arms, expelled the garrison, and drove out Emperor Ferdinand and his aged Minister Metternich. The capital was retaken after frightful slaughter on 30th October by the Emperor's General Jellalich, but on 2nd December Ferdinand signed his abdication in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph.[1] Popular upheavals took place in nearly every German state; there was savage street-fighting in Berlin, and Prince William, heir-presumptive to the throne of Prussia,[2] followed Louis Philippe into exile in England, the traditional Alsatia for unsuccessful princes. But how long would England remain a secure asylum? Convulsions such as were agitating Europe could not fail to make themselves felt in "the right little, tight little island." Indeed Prince Metternich, whose experience of forty years save one as First Minister in Vienna had qualified him to speak with some authority on revolutionary portents, held the opinion that "of all the revolutions threatening Europe, the most violent and destructive would be that of England," giving as his reason that Jacobinism had already done its worst in France, Austria, Prussia, and Italy, but that in England the Church and the aristocracy had immense revenues still untouched and ready to be the spoil of the ravenous democracy which was working its will over the European monarchies."[3] But Metternich had maintained throughout his long administration the hazardous attitude of "sitting on the safety-valve." He viewed with abhorrence the English ideal of government, wherein—

> "Freedom broadens slowly down,
> From precedent to precedent."

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[1] Who is still on the throne (1910).

[2] Succeeded as king 1861; proclaimed German Emperor in 1871.

[3] Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 252.

England, indeed, did not remain unmoved by the convulsions on the Continent, but that very slowness in resorting to repression wherein statesmen of the Metternich school foresaw the wreck of all rule, proved itself once more the surest safeguard of the commonwealth. It allowed so much latitude to leaders of sedition that they fell out among themselves while their following melted quietly away.

Little had been heard of the Chartists since the failure of their petition in 1839, but their organisation was not defunct, only slumbering; and Feargus O'Connor kept up the propaganda in the *Northern Star*, recognised organ of the movement. O'Connor's return for Nottingham in 1847 was a signal triumph, for since Frost's transportation in 1841 he owned no rival in the leadership. Fluent of speech, mighty in frame, lofty of lineage (for would any gentleman care to dispute his descent from Conchobar, King of Connaught?), he was an ideal revolutionary; a martyr to the cause, too, for had he not been sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for sedition in 1840. He had but one disqualification for the task now before him, namely, experience of British bayonets and batons!

The Chartists, 1848.

The financial crisis of 1847 threw tens of thousands out of work; labourers and artisans, idle against their will and despairing of better times, listened eagerly to those who proclaimed the Reign of Liberty. As it had been in France, so it would be in England, only better, for England was the wealthier country. Capital is the sole source of wages; our distress arises from want of wages; therefore, down with capital!—a faultless syllogism for hungry men with starving families.

Feargus O'Connor brought to the national convention of Chartists which assembled in London in spring a spirit tempered by fifty-four years of stormy life. His proposal to proceed once more by petition was coldly received. Not ripe, but rotten, murmured the younger delegates, with real war in their hearts; but O'Connor's authority prevailed. A monster petition was to be signed, to be thrust upon the House of Commons by a monster procession marching from

Kennington Common. It was proposed that all should be armed; O'Connor declared that if that were agreed to he would have no part in the demonstration, and the proposal was overruled. Just as O'Connell had split the Repealers by his submission at Clontarf, so now O'Connor severed the Chartists into rival sects—moderates and combatants. In violence of speech, however, there was little to choose between them, and the Government could not allow the projected intimidation of Parliament to proceed. The petitioners were to assemble, 500,000 strong, at Kennington on 10th April; on the 6th the Home Secretary issued an order prohibiting the meeting; the Duke of Wellington was invited to meet the Cabinet, and to him, now bordering on fourscore, was committed the safety of the town. A few sentences from a letter written by a member of that Cabinet, Lord Campbell, to Sir George Campbell may serve to show the contrast between the old Duke's calmness and the intense trepidation of the public at large.

Friday night, 7th April 1848.

". . . The public alarm increases every hour, and many believe that by Monday evening we shall be under a provisional government. . . . Yesterday evening, the Duke of Wellington beckoned me to cross over to him, and he said to me: 'Lord Cammel, we shall be as quiet on Monday as we are at this hour, and it will end to the credit of the Government and the country.' But he was never famous for knowing the state of the public mind."

On Sunday evening—the Eve of Liberty, as the Chartist orators proclaimed it—Lord Campbell's nerves had recovered some tone. To the same correspondent he expressed himself:—

". . . This may be the last time I write to you before the Republic is established. I have no serious fears of revolution, but there may very likely be bloodshed. . . . [Yesterday] the Duke of Wellington was requested to come to us, which he did very readily. We had then a regular council of war as upon the eve of a great battle. We examined maps and returns and information of the movements of the enemy. . . . The quickness, intelligence, and decision which the Duke displayed were very striking, and he inspired us all with perfect confidence. . . . Macaulay said to me that he considered it the most interesting spectacle he had ever witnessed, and that he should remember it to his dying day."

The Chartists were delighted by the Home Secretary's prohibition: the demonstration should be held, all the same, and woe to the minions of monarchy who should resist the Sovereign People! It is a delicate matter to maintain civil order with military force, witness Peterloo; but Wellington's dispositions were made with perfect discretion.

> "O good gray head which all men knew,
> O voice from which all men their omens drew,
> O iron nerve to true occasion true!"

Having nearly 4000 police at his disposal, the Duke placed them so that the mob should encounter them first. Should these be overpowered, he held several thousand horse and foot in reserve, besides garrisons in the Bank, the Mint, and other important buildings. London citizens to the number of 170,000 were sworn in as special constables.[1] But O'Connor's moderation had broken up the Chartists. The meeting took place, but the war party would not attend it. Instead of half a million, only about 20,000 gathered round the platforms. O'Connor delivered a harangue and went off to the Home Office to report to Sir George Grey that the meeting was passing off without disorder. "Are you going back to it?" asked Grey. "I am not," replied O'Connor; "I've had my toes trodden on till I'm lame; my pocket has been picked, and I've done with them!"

But the petition—no doubt about its dimensions! It was said to bear the signatures of 5,706,000 Chartists. It was to have been carried to Westminster on the shoulders of the procession; a few police inspectors were able to prevent any procession being formed, and the petition was stuffed into five hackney cabs and laid constitutionally enough at the door of the House of Commons. Better for its promoters had it never passed those portals. Having been referred to a Select Committee, it was submitted to analysis by a number of clerks, who found that in place of 5,706,000 signatures it bore only 1,975,406, and that among them appeared those of such influential adherents as Queen Victoria, the Duke of Wellington, Cheeks the Marine, No

[1] Prince Louis Napoleon, living in London as a political exile, was one of this number.

Cheese, Pug Nose, Wooden Legs, &c., besides all kinds of ribald and indecent nicknames.

Chartism was a genuine, an earnest movement; it was an upheaval against class privileges, a revolt against class grievances; but as a political force it collapsed through the disagreement of its leaders; as a social force it was dissolved by the intolerable ridicule of the Monster Petition.

Precisely similar solvents brought about collapse of a revolutionary movement in Ireland during this year. It has been shown above how the Repealers had separated into two groups—the constitutional party under O'Connell, and Young Ireland under Duffy, Meagher, and others. Since the Clontarf fiasco Young Ireland had shown ceaseless activity in rhyme, rhetoric, and rhodomontade. Much of the rhyme was poetry of a very high quality; but some of the speeches and literature were so sanguinary and virulently seditious that a fresh schism took place in the party of physical force. Duffy's *Nation* having been voted far too literary for the men of action, John Mitchel, a young solicitor on the staff of that journal, started an opposition weekly, with the comically inappropriate name of *The United Irishman*, in which he undertook to provide hotter stuff. Mitchel was a fierce revolutionary and a powerful writer; he made his paper the avowed missionary of massacre and rebellion. It provided instructions for the manufacture of pikes and ammunition; it recommended the use of vitriol in civil war, and other inhuman practices. With all their genuine faith in freedom of the press, the Whig Government could not allow such poison to be sown broadcast. They had no power to suppress the print, but they sent Mitchel and two others to trial for high treason. Failing to get a jury to convict the prisoners, Ministers once more had recourse to what they had denounced as coercion. In April they passed the Treason Felony Act, extending the Treason Act of George III. to Ireland, making treason felony a crime punishable by transportation, and meeting the case of Mitchel by providing a similar penalty for "open and advised speaking" with seditious intent. In July the Prime Minister informed

Smith O'Brien and Widow Cormack's cabbages, 29th July 1848.

the House that Ireland was on the brink of armed rebellion, and persuaded it to pass through all its stages a Bill suspending Habeas Corpus in that country for seven months.

Armed with these powers, the Government suppressed the *United Irishman*, and Mitchel, convicted of treason felony under the new Act, was packed off to Bermuda on a sentence of fourteen years.[1]

Young Ireland continued to press the pace, but the party was at some loss for a leader; not from lack of ardent aspirants, but from their superfluity. Mutual jealousy of each other directed their choice upon William Smith O'Brien, M.P. for Limerick, whose sole qualifications as a rebel chief were the extravagant ardour of his professions, his social position as Lord Inchiquin's brother, and his descent from Brian Boroimhe and Turlogh, King of Munster. This gentleman held armed meetings in various parts of the country throughout the spring and summer, but the apprehension felt in England as to a repetition of the scenes of 1798 was turned to mirth by the despatch from Liverpool to London of one of the first telegrams ever published officially in this country. Rebellion, indeed, had actually broken out, Smith O'Brien in person having led a considerable force to attack fifty or sixty constabulary who occupied the house of one Widow Cormack in Tipperary. Much powder was burnt, but little blood was shed, thanks, on the one hand, to the indifferent discipline and marksmanship of the rebels, and, on the other, to the forbearance of the police, who could easily have cut short O'Brien's career, so theatrically did he expose himself during the brief conflict. Three of the rebels were killed and several wounded before they took to their heels, but Widow Cormack's cabbages, which were destroyed by the assailants, still flourish in history. *Solvuntur risu tabulæ.* Condemned as a traitor to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, O'Brien received commutation of his sentence to trans-

[1] In his second trial, Mitchel, of course, was not arraigned upon charges for offences committed before the passing of the Treason Felony Act. He was tried for violently seditious speeches and writings which he persisted in on purpose to provoke prosecution.

portation for life and a free pardon in 1856. He is remembered only as the very caricature of an insurgent leader.

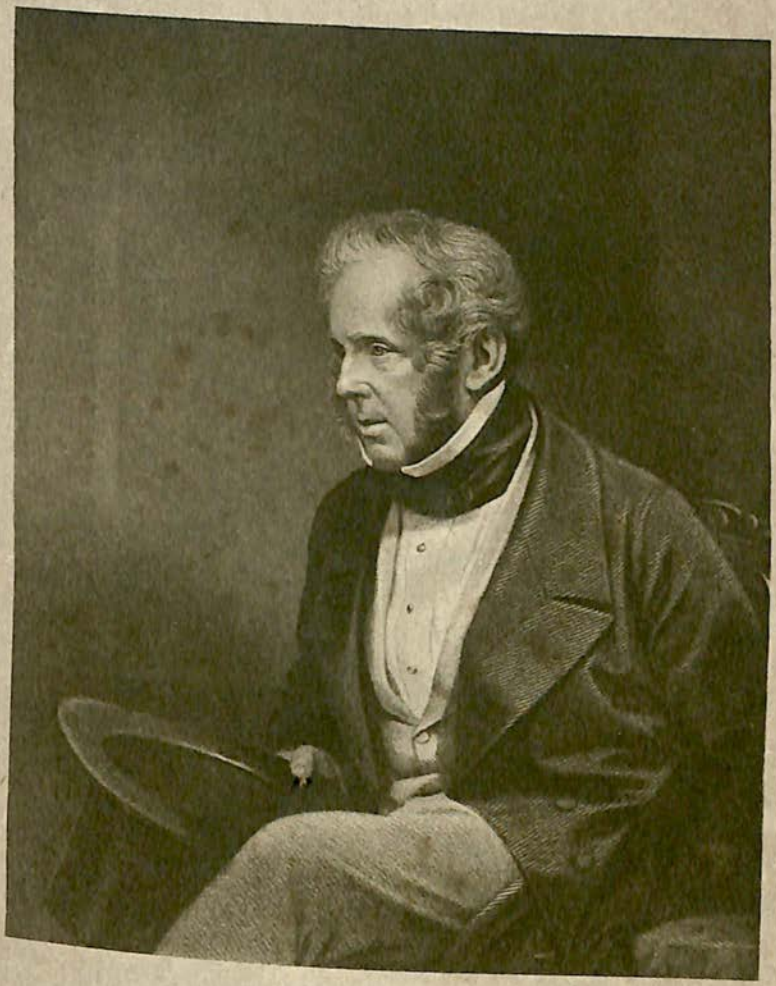
By far the most conspicuous figure in Russell's Cabinet was Lord Palmerston. As sometimes the showiest horse in a team may prove, in stable phrase, "a handful," likely to upset the coach, so Palmerston, dominant from the first in virtue of his energy and impetuous temperament, soon began to domineer over both Sovereign and Parliament.

Lord Palmerston, 1784–1865.

Henry John Temple, third Viscount Palmerston in the peerage of Ireland, held political office for a longer period than any other British Minister, and remains one of the most distinct and remarkable characters in British politics of the nineteenth century. Entering Parliament in 1807 as Tory member for Newport, Isle of Wight, he was forthwith appointed a Lord of the Admiralty in the Portland Ministry. In 1809, being then five-and-twenty, he declined Perceval's invitation to become Chancellor of the Exchequer, but accepted the post of Secretary at War,[1] which he retained until 1828. Canning would have had him Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1827, but George IV. put his veto on that. He seceded from Wellington's Ministry in 1828 with the other Canningites, and took office as Foreign Secretary in Grey's Cabinet of 1830, holding it, except during Peel's short administration in 1834–35, until the fall of Melbourne's Government in 1841. On his return to the Foreign Office in 1846 he took a line of his own, which brought upon him the Queen's displeasure, sorely tried the nerves of his colleagues, and rudely jarred the *entente cordiale* which Aberdeen and Guizot had established between the governments of England and France.

There is probably no matter wherein a British Minister of to-day would feel less obligation or inclination to mell than the matrimonial affairs of foreign royalties; but sixty years ago the traditional importance of inter-dynastic marriages was an article in the creed of orthodox diplomats. Palmerston was in office in 1810 when Napoleon divorced Josephine in order to make a political match with the Austrian Marie-Louise, which did not restrain Austria from

[1] Corresponding to that of Financial Secretary to the War Office.



Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston

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joining the coalition of Powers in 1813; whence Palmerston might have learnt to what a slight extent the destinies of nations are swayed by the nuptials of princes. When he succeeded Aberdeen as Foreign Secretary he took over a case which required, and had received, very delicate handling.

In 1829 Ferdinand VII., the worthless Bourbon restored to the Spanish throne by British arms, married a fourth wife, Maria Christina of Naples, by whom he had two daughters. Having no son, he annulled the Salic law by pragmatic sanction, despite the protests of his brothers Carlos and Francisco. Accordingly, on Ferdinand's death in 1833, the eldest daughter, Isabella, was proclaimed Queen, and Don Carlos raised the Basque provinces in arms to maintain his claim. In 1843 Queen Isabella became of legal age, and it was the concern of the Government to find husbands for her and her sister Maria Luisa. No concern to England, one should say nowadays; yet not only Palmerston, but the rest of the Cabinet and Queen Victoria herself, thought differently. Notwithstanding the friendly relations between the British and French governments, Louis Philippe and his Minister, M. Guizot, were intensely jealous of British influence in Spanish affairs; a frame of mind which we should be cautious in pronouncing irrational, seeing that the suspicion was mutual between the two Governments. Ever since the close of the great war it had been the policy of British Cabinets to encourage the Progesista or Liberal party in Spain, whereof the leader, General Espartero, had been elected Regent in 1840, when Queen Christina, a Moderado or Absolutist, was compelled to seek refuge at the French Court.

The Spanish marriages, 1843–47.

"The Queen hopes that, as far as possible, the English Government will support the present Regent, who is thoroughly attached to England. . . . The French intrigues should really be frustrated. . . . The conduct of France regarding Spain has always been very equivocal."[1]

Now it was the darling project of Louis Philippe and M. Guizot to secure French and Absolutist ascendancy in Spain by marrying one or both of the Princesses to one or

[1] Queen Victoria to Lord Aberdeen, 16th Oct. 1841.

both of the French king's sons, the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Montpensier. To this both Peel's Government and Russell's offered resolute resistance, although Queen Christina wished nothing better. The French Government, therefore, resorted to a scheme of revolting cynicism in order to secure the succession for the house of Orleans. The girl-queen Isabella was to marry her cousin Don Francisco, Duke of Cadiz, and her sister the Infanta was to marry the French Duc de Montpensier. The infernal ingenuity of this device consisted in the belief that Don Francisco was physically incapable of having offspring, which would ensure the succession of the Infanta's heir by the French prince.

To a plot so transparent the British Government would give no sanction. In August 1845, Queen Victoria, accompanied by her Secretary of State Aberdeen, met Louis Philippe and M. Guizot at the Château d'Eu and received their solemn assurance that no French prince should marry the Infanta of Spain until Queen Isabella had been married and had children. Thus matters stood when the fall of Peel's administration transferred the conduct of negotiations from Aberdeen's hands to Palmerston's. Up to this point the British Cabinet had declined any interference with the question of the Spanish marriage, further than objecting to Queen Isabella marrying a French prince. But Palmerston felt an honest horror at the fate prepared for the unhappy young Queen, Don Francisco, whom he pronounced to be "an absolute and Absolutist fool," being personally repulsive to her in many respects. One of his first acts, therefore, on returning to the Foreign Office was to write a despatch to Mr. Bulwer,[1] Ambassador at Madrid, in which he mentioned Prince Leopold, brother of the King of Portugal and cousin of Prince Albert, as a desirable match for Queen Isabella. Most imprudently he showed this despatch to the Comte de Jarnac, French Ambassador at St. James's, who sounded the alarm to his own Government. Louis Philippe and M. Guizot, detesting Palmerston as the patron of every revolution in Europe, professed to detect, in the mere mention of Prince Leopold as a suitor, a breach of faith

[1] Created Baron Dalling and Bulwer in 1871.

absolving them from the promise given at Château d'Eu, and on 10th October 1846 Queen Isabella was married to her disagreeable cousin, Don Francisco, and the Infanta to the Duc de Montpensier. Time was to prove that the stratagem was not only ignoble but unsuccessful, inasmuch as Queen Isabella bore children after all, and the coveted succession never came to the House of Orleans. But before that result came to pass the House of Orleans itself had fallen; Louis Philippe and his Queen were fugitives in England,[1] and another French exile—Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, to wit—had left that universal asylum for the unpopular, had been proclaimed President of the second French Republic, and France had closed her gates once and for all against Bourbon and Orleans alike, whose princes continued obstinately blind to the lesson writ so large and so lately in the history of their country.

Palmerston remained quite indifferent to the risks into which his high-handed dealings with the Powers of Europe had brought his country. The Queen had to complain frequently of the manner in which he kept her in the dark as to his doings, until at last, on 19th September 1848, she told Lord John Russell that "she really could hardly go on with him; that she had no confidence in him, and felt very uneasy from one day to another as to what might happen. . . . She fully believed that the Spanish marriage question, the original cause of so many present misfortunes, would never have become so *embrouillé* had it not been for Lord Palmerston."[2] Russell agreed that Palmerston was distrusted in every foreign court, but was far too much afraid of his headstrong colleague to think of removing him to some other office. Such a proposal, he assured the Queen, would make Palmerston an active and formidable enemy of the Government. All very well, said the Queen,

Queen Victoria's displeasure with Palmerston, 1846–1850.

[1] They were smuggled on board a steam-packet at Havre by Mr. Featherstonhaugh, British consul there, who made out passports for them as Mr. and Mrs. Smith. The King was disguised by an enormous pair of goggles and his whiskers were shaved off. At the very moment he was embarking an officer and three gendarmes arrived in Havre to arrest him. Queen Victoria lent him Claremont, near Esher, as a residence.

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 195.

"but I am afraid that some day I shall have to tell you that I cannot put up with Lord Palmerston any longer, which may be very disagreeable and awkward."[1] With the House of Commons and the public, who care little and know less about foreign affairs until they come to a crisis, Palmerston was rising rapidly in esteem. Inside the House, both Protectionists and Peelites deemed him to be *the* safe man in the Cabinet, while his uncompromising hostility to Absolutism on the Continent secured him the hearty support of the Radicals. In the country "Old Pam" was steadily coming to be regarded as the ideal English statesman; his bluff and jaunty manner carried the confidence of people at large; nor did the regular appearance of his colours at Newmarket and Epsom tend in any way to diminish his popularity.

The ascendancy which Palmerston had attained by this time over the House of Commons was proved by what in other hands might have been but a trivial incident—perhaps might never have amounted to an incident at all. It arose out of a disturbance which took place in Athens in April 1847, when the Greek police were directed to interfere with the annual Eastertide custom of burning Judas Iscariot in effigy. The populace, intensely irritated by the prohibition, and attributing it to the influence of certain rich Jews, proceeded to wreck their houses and premises. Among those who suffered was a Portuguese Jew named Don Pacifico, who, having been born in Gibraltar, was technically a British subject, and appealed to the British Government for redress. Simultaneously Mr. George Finlay, friend of Byron and historian of Greece, lodged a claim for compensation arising out of his expropriation from a piece of land by the Greek Government upon terms which he considered unfair. This transaction had taken place fourteen years previously. Also there were certain other claims outstanding against Greece on the part of Great Britain; Palmerston lumped them all together with those of Don Pacifico and Mr. Finlay, and peremptorily demanded a settlement.

The affair of Don Pacifico, 1849–50.

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 196.

The Greek Government, being very short of ready money, procrastinated; Palmerston's patience had its limits, and in January 1850 he ordered Sir William Parker to the Piræus with fifteen ships of war. Parker seized some Greek gunboats, captured some Greek merchantmen at sea, laid an embargo upon those in port, and blockaded Athens. Still the Greek Government refused or delayed to comply with Palmerston's demands, appealing to the French and Russian governments, joint guarantors with Great Britain of the independence of Greece. The situation became grave. Russia, detesting Palmerston and all his works, took up the cause of the weaker nation in a spirit of angry menace. Count Nesselrode wrote a letter to the Russian Minister in London, desiring him to read it to Lord Palmerston. It was long and fierce, ending with the following sentences:—

"The Emperor charges you, M. le Baron, to address on this subject serious representations to the English Government, to urge them, in the most pressing manner, to hasten the cessation of a state of things at Athens which nothing justifies or necessitates. . . . The reception which may be given to our representations may have considerable influence on the nature of the relations we are henceforth to expect from England—let me add, on the position of all the Powers, great or small, whose coast exposes them to a sudden attack. It remains, indeed, to be seen whether Great Britain, abusing the advantages which are afforded to her by her immense maritime superiority, intends henceforward to pursue an isolated policy, without caring for those engagements which bind her to other Cabinets; whether she intends to disengage herself from every obligation as well as from all community of action, and to authorise all Great Powers on every fitting opportunity to recognise towards the weak no other rule but their own will, no other right but their own physical strength."

Perilously near an ultimatum, this; but Palmerston felt no tremors—replied, in effect, that here was no affair of Russia's. The French Republican Government was more conciliatory, proposing to refer the disputed claims to an international convention. This was agreed to, and Palmerston consenting also to a considerable modification in the British demands; but there was so much delay in communicating the result that the British Minister at Athens continued his endeavours to coerce the Greek.

Government into paying the full amount originally demanded.

Thereupon arose grave misunderstanding between Great Britain and France; Palmerston was roundly accused of double-dealing; M. Drouyn de Lhuys, French Ambassador, was recalled from London, and a declaration of war seemed to be a question not of days, but of hours.

In the House of Lords, Lord Stanley carried a vote of censure upon the Government; the Radical Roebuck in the House of Commons moved a vote of confidence to balance matters. Nobody expected him to carry it, for Palmerston's case was a wretchedly weak one from the first, nor had it been strengthened by the misunderstanding with the French and Russian governments. People were indignant at the possibility of a European war for the sake of a few paltry thousands of pounds. Nevertheless, Palmerston made good his defence, speaking with extraordinary vigour for nearly five hours, from half-past ten till half-past three, and winding up with a peroration which, in the mouth of any other than "Old Pam," might have sounded sheer claptrap. "If," he asked, "a subject of ancient Rome could hold himself free from indignity by saying *Civis Romanus sum*, shall not a British subject also, in whatever land he may be, feel confident that the watchful eye and strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong?" The House was carried away by this appeal, all the more readily from its normal inclination to flout the House of Lords. The vote of confidence was carried by 310 votes to 264—majority for Ministers, 46.

Civis Romanus sum, June 1850.

But although Palmerston had secured the support of the House of Commons, he was further than ever from regaining the confidence of his Sovereign. Queen Victoria's letters at this time are full of indignant complaint of the treatment vouchsafed to her by her Foreign Secretary:—

". . . She feels the duty she owes to the country and to herself not to allow a man in whom she can have no confidence, who has conducted himself in *anything but* a straightforward and proper manner to herself, to remain in the Foreign Office, and thereby to expose herself to insults from other nations, and the country to the

constant risk of serious and alarming complications. . . . Each time we were in a difficulty, the Government seemed to be determined to move Lord Palmerston, and as soon as these difficulties were got over, those which present themselves in the carrying out of this removal appeared of so great a magnitude as to cause its relinquishment. There is no chance of Lord Palmerston reforming himself in his sixty-seventh year, and after having considered his last escape a triumph." [1]

Russell continued profuse in excuse, ingenious in palliation, of his formidable colleague's indiscretions, well knowing that his position in Parliament was not worth a week's purchase if he offended Palmerston.

The Pacifico debate, which occupied four days, is chiefly to be remembered as the last in which Sir Robert Peel took part. He spoke in opposition to the vote of confidence, though he let it be known that he would not have supported a vote of censure, and passed encomium on "that most able and temperate speech [Palmerston's], which made us proud of the man who delivered it." He opposed the vote, because it implied a departure from the principle of not interfering in the domestic affairs of other countries unless compelled to do so by some grave necessity arising out of circumstances affecting our own country. Nobody could pretend that Pacifico's bedchamber ware and drawing-room carpet constituted such circumstances. "For these reasons I give my dissent—my reluctant dissent—from the motion." Those were the last words he uttered from his place in that House in which, since the death of Canning, he had without question been the dominant figure. He left the House of Commons, after voting, about four o'clock in the morning of 29th June. A few hours later, after attending a meeting of the Exhibition Commissioners at noon, he mounted his horse, stopped at Buckingham Palace to write his name in the Queen's visiting book, and rode up Constitution Hill. There, just as he met the Hon. Miss Ellis who was riding down, his horse shied and threw him heavily. One of his ribs was broken and driven into his lung; he lived in dreadful agony till 2nd July, when he died at the comparatively early age of sixty-two.

Death of Sir Robert Peel, 2nd July 1850.

[1] Queen Victoria to Lord John Russell, 28th July 1850.

Peel's suffering during those last days reminds one how incalculable is the boon conferred upon humanity by the use of anæsthetics. He, indeed, derived no benefit from it; for although the American Guthrie and the Frenchman Soubeiran had simultaneously discovered chloroform in 1831, and although Lawrence of London and Simpson of Edinburgh had begun to employ it in hospitals, it had not come into general use in 1850.[1]

Peel's character and acts have been submitted to more searching criticism than that applied to most public men. His record is a plain one, and none will be found to dispute its lustre and integrity down to the crisis of 1845. From that point there has been, there always will be, difference of judgment upon his conduct—judgment which few minds have detachment enough to dissociate from prepossession in favour of Free Trade or Protection. On the face of it, one must admit that a Minister who has won the confidence of the country by professing well-defined principles on a clear issue can never be justified in retaining office in order to overturn those very principles. Government by party has many defects; but it has also many merits, which would be utterly rotted and ruined if a politician's private honour were not held to be involved in his public pledges. Nobody who has read Peel's correspondence will suspect the sincerity of his purpose to maintain the Corn Laws when he took office in 1841. Wellington, who often disagreed with him and spoke frankly of his impatience with his methods, declared that he "never knew a man" (and how many men he had known!) "in whose truth and justice he had more lively confidence;" but

[1] Greville witnessed one of the first operations under chloroform in St. George's Hospital in 1847, and wrote: "I have no words to express my admiration for this invention, which is the greatest blessing ever bestowed upon mankind, and the inventor of it the greatest of benefactors, whose memory ought to be venerated by countless millions for ages yet to come."

It is told of Sir James Simpson that, when he began using chloroform to obviate the pains of childbirth, certain pious persons protested that such a proceeding was impious, because God in expelling Eve from Paradise had said: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." Simpson defended himself by reminding those who rebuked him that before God removed the rib from Adam's side He cast him into a deep sleep!

having undertaken the government upon that understanding, what course was he bound to take when he became subsequently converted to a fiscal policy which he had openly repudiated? He has told us what he meant to do. "It was my intention," he says in his *Memoirs*, "but for the unforeseen events of the autumn of 1845, to enter into that friendly communication, the absence of which is blamed and lamented, to apprise the Conservative party, before the Corn Law could be discussed in the session of 1846, that my views with regard to the policy of maintaining that law had undergone a change, and that I could no longer undertake as a Minister to resist a motion for the consideration of the whole question."

So far would such a course have been from the "betrayal" for which Peel was execrated by his party, it was the only course which, as an honest leader and colleague, he could possibly have taken. But to proceed in that way time was needful, and time was the one thing which the potato famine put out of the question. Action, prompt and drastic, was forced upon the Government, and the only question before Peel and his Cabinet was whether that action should be taken by them, or whether they should resign in favour of men who were free from hampering pledges.

It had been more in accord with British parliamentary spirit if the Cabinet had taken the latter course; it would have mitigated the bitterness of rupture in a great party, probably have averted that rupture altogether, if the Liberals had been allowed to carry into effect the policy which they had made their own. Peel and the Conservative minority which shared his views would have supported them with perfect consistency, and lapse of time might have been trusted to heal the difference between them and the majority after the only question which drove them apart had ceased to be an open one. But what the Conservative party could not forgive—what reduced it to impotence for many a year to come—was the feeling that they had been led blindfold into a trap.

CHAPTER X

Prince Albert—The Great Exhibition—Scare about papal aggression—The Prime Minister's manifesto—Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Defeat and resignation of Russell's Government—Russell resumes office—Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*—Palmerston's dismissal—His revenge—Lord Derby's first administration—Death of Wellington—Restoration of the French Empire—Napoleon III.'s matrimonial project—Defeat and resignation of Derby's Government.

PRINCE ALBERT had to live down a considerable amount of insular jealousy in the first few years of his married life; and this he did, not only by personal conduct very different from what the English people had grown used to expect from their princes, not only by his attractive personality and social qualities, but by the wise restraint which he imposed upon himself in respect of politics and legislation. For the first time in the history of England there was no Court party, neither was the Court of any party. It has been shown that at the time of her accession Queen Victoria was an active and ardent Whig, entertaining the strongest aversion for and suspicion of Peel. Twelve years later, when Peel lay dying, she wrote to King Leopold: "I cannot bear even to think of losing him; it would be the greatest loss for the whole country, and irreparable for us, for he is so trustworthy, and so entirely to be depended on."[1] This novel detachment of the Head of the State from any political party cannot be traced to indolence or indifference on the part either of the Queen or her Consort. Until King Edward allowed his mother's correspondence to be printed, very few people can have been aware of the incessant vigilance exercised by Queen Victoria over the acts of her Ministers, the searching, often forcible, criticism which she passed upon their despatches, and the readiness with which all of them, except Palmerston, complied with

Prince Albert, 1819–61.

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 253.

her suggestions. Two heads are better than one. Queen Victoria's perfect fulfilment of the functions of a constitutional monarch was the outcome of wedded intellects, each of a high order and the complement of the other; the hereditary conservatism of the German prince modifying, but not overriding, the liberal training of his Queen.

Prince Albert, fully recognising that he was restrained by the recent development of representative government from personal interference in legislation and diplomacy, never conceived himself exempted from an obligation to acquaint himself thoroughly with the course of politics, as well as with the special work of the public departments. He was, besides, indefatigable in schemes of social and commercial advancement, as well as in scientific progress and the encouragement of the fine arts. An early riser, it was his custom, summer and winter, to dispose of a couple of hours' work before breakfast. People had got to understand and appreciate his abilities and disposition, and the time had now come when his industry was to bear remarkable fruit.

Prince Albert was President of the Society of Arts, a body which has led a commendable, if unobtrusive, existence in its home in the Adelphi since the latter half of the eighteenth century. It had from time to time offered prizes for British textile, ceramic, and other manufactures, and in July 1849 Prince Albert laid before some of its members a proposal to give the competitions an international scope. A royal commission was appointed to carry out the scheme; Somerset House was secured for the exhibition, but so eagerly was the project taken up by foreign manufacturers, and by artists at home and abroad, that it very soon became clear that no permanent building would suffice for a tenth part of the exhibits. Scant time for other arrangements, seeing that May Day 1851 had been fixed for the opening; designs for a new building had to be submitted, specifications made out, tenders accepted, materials collected, and erection completed, all within the space of nine months.

The Great Exhibition, 1851.

A site in Hyde Park was chosen, and the Commissioners set to work to examine no fewer than 245 separate

designs and specifications, sent in by architects in all parts of the civilised world. They had all but decided in favour of a French architect's design, when one Joseph Paxton, not a professional architect, but superintendent of the Duke of Devonshire's garden at Chatsworth, produced a scheme so original and simple that it was adopted at once. It was an enormous conservatory of glass and iron, 1848 feet long (one-third of a mile), 408 feet broad, and 66 feet high, with transepts so constructed as to enclose some of the elms in Hyde Park.

The Commissioners did not finally decide until 26th July; not a single casting or piece of material had been prepared; yet the contractors, Messrs. Fox, Henderson, and Co., undertook to hand over the building to painters and fitters on 31st December, and did so. Unfriendly critics there were in plenty; among their snarls might be heard the sonorous growl of the *Times* against the vulgarity of desecrating Hyde Park by a huge speculative undertaking. Colonel Sibthorpe complained in the House of Commons that "when Free Trade had left nothing else wanting to complete the ruin of the Empire, the devil had suggested the idea of the Great Exhibition, so that foreigners who had first robbed us of our trade might now be enabled to rob us of our honour."

In one respect only was the opening ceremony disappointing. Prince Albert invited the Corps Diplomatique in London to present an address to the Queen on the occasion. By a majority of three they declined to do so, so jealous were most of the Continental governments of the effect upon their own subjects of closer acquaintance with English institutions, which they considered so dangerously liberal.

Nevertheless the Crystal Palace, as it came to be named, proved a success from first to last. Although it vanished with the leaves of a single summer it fulfilled what Prince Albert had explained to be its object, namely, "to give a true test and living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind had arrived."

We have grown used to great international displays in the last fifty years, and Colonel Sibthorpe's apprehension of

evil has proved groundless enough; nevertheless, circumstances arose towards the close of 1850 to give his words more weight than they deserved.

The Pope, Pio Nono, having been restored to the Vatican by French arms after two years' exile from Rome, turned his attention to England, where, as he was advised, the Tractarian movement indicated a general gravitation of the nation towards reunion with his church. The secession of Newman, Manning, and other conspicuous churchmen from the Anglican fold was explained to him as portending a widespread rupture, and he was assured that the great mass of Englishmen were only waiting for his assurance that they would be received back with welcome. Accordingly he issued a brief re-establishing in Great Britain a hierarchy of bishops, bearing titles derived from the various sees to which they were to be appointed. There had been vicars apostolic and bishops in England ever since the Reformation; had it been possible to introduce a regular hierarchy with less ostentation, Protestants might have taken it as more complimentary than the old system, under which these prelates were styled *in partibus infidelium*, thus classing Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Dissenters in a common category with Hottentots and Hindus. But the language of the papal brief was not calculated to conciliate Englishmen, who, even before the rupture with Rome, had always been jealous of interference by the Court of Rome. Pio Nono now referred to the Church of England as "the Anglican schism," and directly defied both that church and the British Parliament to interfere with papal authority. "We decree," ran the last paragraph, "that whatever may be attempted by whomsoever and by whatsoever authority, willingly or in ignorance, to set aside the matters hereinbefore contained, shall be void and of no effect."[1]

The scare of papal aggression, 1850–51.

The average Englishman was quite indifferent to being called and regarded as an infidel by the Pope; he might even have treated papal patronage thrust upon him in this minatory manner as *brutum fulmen;* but on the top of the Bull came a pastoral letter addressed to the English people

[1] The Bull is printed at length in the *Annual Register* for 1850, p. 411.

by Cardinal Wiseman, appointed Archbishop of Westminster informing them that "your beloved country has received a place among the fair churches which, normally constituted, form the splendid aggregate of Catholic communion."[1] Hardly could Wiseman have found expressions better calculated to rouse the passions of good Protestants. Either the Reformation, for which the country had paid so heavy a price, was a reality worth defending, in which case this act of the Court of Rome must be treated as overt aggression; or it was an obsolete blunder, which the Pope was ready to overlook and to resume spiritual sway over the people of Great Britain. Other utterances there were of a highly irritating nature; such as that spoken by Dr. Newman in his sermon at the consecration of the Bishop of Birmingham, when he declared that "the people of England, who for so many years had been separated from the Church of Rome, were about of their own will to be added to the Holy Church."

Such vaunts, spoken by a Highland Free Kirk minister or a Congregationalist pastor, would have attracted no attention outside the walls where they were spoken; but uttered by missionaries of the most powerful ecclesiastical organisation in the world, they went far to justify those who raised the cry of papal aggression. Sincere Protestants could scarcely be expected to allow such things, spoken in public and trumpeted through the land, to pass unchallenged. Unfortunately, once open the gates of sectarian controversy, and men quickly lose all control over their tongues and pens. Lord John Russell was among the first to do so. On 4th November 1850 he published a manifesto in the form of a letter to the Bishop of Durham "denouncing the aggression of the Pope upon our Protestantism as insolent and insidious," declared that the mass of the nation looked "with contempt on the mummeries of superstition, and with scorn at the laborious endeavours which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul."

The Prime Minister's manifesto, 4th Nov. 1850.

Deplorable expressions these from the First Minister of

[1] Wiseman had been appointed a Vicar Apostolic in England in 1840, under the title of Bishop of Melipotamus *in partibus infidelium*.

an Empire containing millions of Roman Catholic subjects; but the Head of that Empire sounded a nobler note when Russell, in February 1851, submitted a Bill to prevent the assumption by Roman Catholics of titles taken from places within the United Kingdom.

"I would never have consented," wrote Queen Victoria to the Duchess of Gloucester, "to anything which breathed a spirit of intolerance. Sincerely Protestant as I have always been and always shall be, and indignant as I am at those who call themselves Protestants while they are, in fact, quite the contrary, I much regret the intolerant and unchristian spirit exhibited by many people at the public meetings. I cannot bear to hear the violent abuse of the Catholic religion, which is so painful and so cruel towards the many good and innocent Roman Catholics."

Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, 1851.

No monarch ever wrote more wisely. It was both necessary and desirable to give effect to the national repugnance to spiritual interference, but it was imperative that religious liberty should remain absolutely unfettered. The progress of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was like that of Samson's foxes through the Philistines' corn: it kindled every slumbering sentiment of acrimony and sectarian hate. At the very time when the finishing touches were being put to the Crystal Palace, which people were being instructed to regard as the herald and emblem of universal peace and goodwill, honourable members were hurling the most injurious epithets at each other across the floor of the House of Commons, as if bent upon showing that, whatever prospect there might be of establishing concord among mankind in general, there was none whatever of getting Christian sects to agree among themselves. Roebuck, speaking for the Radicals, declared the Bill to be "one of the meanest, pettiest, and most futile measures that ever disgraced even bigotry itself"; Sir James Graham, for the Peelites (or some of them), warned the House that if the object of the Bill was to put down the Pope's spiritual supremacy, they were renewing that dire conflict which for two hundred years had distracted England and ruined Ireland; Disraeli, for the Protectionists, poured ridicule upon the Bill, while the Irish members were lashed to fury by an

onslaught on the Papacy by Mr. Henry Drummond, one of the few members who spoke in favour of the measure. In the end, only 63 members had the hardihood to vote against the first reading, so fierce was the feeling in the constituencies; 395 voted for it, giving the Government a majority of 332.

Emphatic riposte upon Cardinal Wiseman; but before the Bill could reach a further stage sudden disaster overtook its authors. Just as Peel had fallen on the morrow of his Corn Law victory, so within a week of the sweeping majority on papal aggression was Russell overthrown upon Locke King's motion for lowering the country franchise.

Defeat and resignation of Government, 20th Feb. 1851.

Russell opposed it on the ground that to equalise the country and borough franchises, by altering the rural occupier's qualification from £50 to £10, would swamp the county electorate with a class of voters peculiarly under landlord influence. He himself was ready to bring in a new Reform Bill, and promised to do so in the following year; but he would have nothing to do with Locke King's "new and fanciful edifice." Locke King was ready to accept Russell's promise and to withdraw his Bill, but Joseph Hume declared that the promise would be withdrawn in a fortnight, and forced a division.

Ministers, relying on the Protectionists to oppose any extension of the franchise, had been careless in mustering their forces on a private member's night; but the Protectionists, perceiving their opportunity, marched out before the division, leaving the Radicals to inflict a rattling defeat on the Government by a majority of 48 votes.

Russell resigned forthwith. The Queen sent for Lord Stanley, whom she found determined to restore the corn duty: the Queen, Prince Albert, and the aged Duke of Wellington were of one mind about that—the country would never stand it; so Stanley recommended that Russell should try a coalition with the Peelites. He did so, but so greatly did Aberdeen and Graham dislike the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill that negotiations broke down at once. Aberdeen was sent for next, but he protested that no Government could stand unless it dealt with papal aggression, which he was

resolved not to touch. Then Stanley most reluctantly tried his hand, and failing to secure the adhesion of Mr. Gladstone, had to inform the Queen that he, too, must give up the attempt.

Such an obstinate deadlock there had not been since 1812, when the Lords Wellesley, Moira, Grey, and Grenville successively had tried and failed to form a government. It was brought to an end by the Queen asking advice from an old and tried servant. The Duke of Wellington, in his eighty-third year, bent and deaf, but still of vigorous intellect, wrote, in terms as terse and decisive as in one of his general orders, that "the party still filling the offices is the one best calculated to carry on the government at the present moment." Accordingly, the Queen having desired Russell to resume office, the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was taken up again and passed; shorn, however, of all its penal clauses, it remained no more than a mere declaration that it was illegal for Roman Catholic prelates to assume British territorial titles.[1]

Russell resumes office, 3rd March 1851.

The Great Exhibition having been closed on 15th October, hardly had the contractors begun to dismantle its glittering domes when the vision of universal peace was violently dispelled by events in France. Louis Napoleon's four years' term of office was drawing to a close, and it seemed unlikely that the National Assembly would re-elect one who had shown so much inclination for absolute power. The President, on his part, had no mind for any place but the first; if power would not come to him in a constitutional way, he must seize it. On 2nd December, the anniversary of his uncle's victory at Austerlitz, he dissolved the Assembly, issued a manifesto to the army, caused all the leaders of the Opposition to be arrested, and imprisoned two hundred and thirty deputies who disapproved of this proceeding. Night passed, and a day, and another night before the capital seemed to realise what had happened. On the morning of the 4th, the boulevards being crowded with curious folk, troops were stationed and batteries posted in commanding positions; here and there barricades were thrown across the

Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*, 2nd Dec. 1851.

[1] The Act was repealed in 1871.

streets, but there were no signs of a serious rising. Suddenly the infantry opened fire upon the crowd on one of the boulevards; other detachments did the like; hundreds of innocent persons were massacred; if the populace had intended mischief, they were cowed to submission, and the *coup d'état* was complete.

Meanwhile, on 3rd December, Comte Walewski, French Minister in London, informed Lord Palmerston about the events of the 2nd: Palmerston applauded the President's conduct, but on the 6th had to convey formally to Lord Normanby, British Minister in Paris, the Cabinet's instructions that he was to refrain from any interference with the internal affairs of France and to maintain strict neutrality between political parties.

When Normanby communicated these instructions to the French Foreign Minister, M. Turgot replied that there must be some mistake, because Lord Palmerston had already expressed cordial approval of the President's action. Further, on the same day that Palmerston was writing official instructions from the Cabinet, he addressed an extraordinary and insulting letter to Normanby, complaining of the want of sympathy he showed with the *coup d'état*.[1] Normanby wrote in perplexity to the Prime Minister, protesting against the terms of Palmerston's letters, and then it all came out how this most unruly Foreign Minister had been at his old game of treating the Sovereign as a cipher and acting in direct opposition to the instructions of the Cabinet. The crisis so long dreaded—so often avoided—by Russell had arrived: Palmerston must be got rid of and told to do his worst. Russell wrote demanding an explanation of his conduct. The culprit neglected to reply for some days; when he did so, it was in terms that left Russell no alternative but to

[1] "Your despatches since the event of Tuesday have been all hostile to Louis Napoleon, with very little information as to events. One of them consisted of a dissertation about Kossuth, which would have made a good article in the *Times* a fortnight ago; and another dwells chiefly on a looking-glass broken in a club-house; and you are pathetic about a piece of broken plaster brought down from a ceiling by musket shots during the street fights. Now we know that the diplomatic agents of Austria and Russia called on the President immediately after his measure on Tuesday morning, and have been profuse in their expressions of approval of his conduct."

call upon him to resign. At the same time he offered him a British peerage and the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, both of which the indignant Minister contemptuously rejected. Palmerston retired into the position of a private member of Parliament, nursing his wrath for the day of vengeance; nor had he to nurse it long.

Palmerston's dismissal, 17th Dec. 1851.

The dismissal of a Minister had become so rare a phenomenon in British politics that the Foreign Secretary's fall created a notable stir in every European Cabinet. Palmerston, though he must have known better, affected to consider that he had been sacrificed to propitiate the reactionary governments of Austria, Russia, and other countries; he told his brother that the minds of the Queen and Prince Albert had been "effectually poisoned" against him, and that he had fallen a victim to "weak truckling to the hostile intrigues of the Orleans family." He wished to make out that he had had to contend with a Court party as men knew it in the reigns of the Georges. "Of course you will believe," he wrote to Russell, "that I feel that just indignation at the whole proceeding which it must produce." Never was indignation more unjust. Lord Palmerston had been treated with extraordinary consideration. Despite repeated warnings, he had on many occasions deliberately set aside the instructions of the Queen and the Cabinet, and, little more than a month before his crowning act of insubordination, he had openly defied the authority of the Prime Minister in the following manner. Kossuth, the Hungarian revolutionary leader, having sought refuge in England, was making a series of speeches in the southern towns, denouncing the guilt of European monarchs in general and of the Emperor of Austria in particular. He expressed a wish to thank Palmerston in person for the sympathy he had shown with the popular movement in Hungary. Palmerston replied that he would be happy to receive him at Broadlands, his seat in Hampshire, whenever he liked. Russell, hearing of this, wrote "positively requesting him to do no such thing," to which Palmerston rudely replied: "There are limits to all things. I do not choose to be dictated to as to who I may or may not

receive in my own house. . . . I shall use my discretion. . . . You will, of course, use yours as to the composition of your Government." Russell, so great was his anxiety to avoid a Cabinet crisis, discreetly ignored the challenge and swallowed the affront. Palmerston, in fact, did not receive Kossuth (officially, at least);[1] but he did what was even more offensive to the Austrian Government—he allowed a Radical deputation to wait upon him at the Foreign Office and to present addresses thanking him for his kindness to Kossuth. In these addresses the Emperors of Austria and Russia were referred to as "odious and detestable assassins" and merciless tyrants and despots. The Queen would have proved herself culpably indifferent to good governance had she given the consent of silence to the vagaries of her Foreign Minister. On 20th November she wrote a strong remonstrance on the subject to Russell:—

"The Queen's feelings have again been deeply wounded by the official conduct of her Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs since the arrival of M. Kossuth in this country. The Queen feels the best interests of her people, the honour and dignity of her Crown, her public and private obligations towards those Sovereigns with whom she *professes* to be on terms of peace and amity, most unjustifiably exposed. The Queen has unfortunately very often had to call upon Lord John to check his colleague in the dangerous and unbecoming course which at various times he has so wilfully persevered in pursuing. But Lord John Russell, although agreeing on most of these occasions with the view taken by the Queen, has invariably met her remonstrances with the plea that to push his interference with Lord Palmerston beyond what he has done would lead to a rupture with him, and thus necessarily to a breaking up of the Cabinet."[2]

Undoubtedly the Queen was much displeased with her Foreign Minister, as she had good reason to be; but to assert, as Mr. Justin M'Carthy has done, that "the Court was set against Lord Palmerston at that time,"[3] is to give a most misleading impression of the relation prevailing between the Sovereign and the administration. It cannot be too clearly insisted, at the risk of repetition, that,

[1] The Queen told Russell that she had "every reason to believe that he [Palmerston] has seen him after all" (*Letters*, ii. 331).

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 328.

[3] *A History of Our Own Times*, ii. 86 (ed. 1882).

throughout the reign of Victoria, there was no Court party in politics. The Head of the State had risen above all parties; it was upon measures, not men, that she exerted her rightful influence; when one of her Ministers persisted in measures which she saw would embroil the country with friendly Powers, she naturally desired to employ another servant.

Lord John replied to the Queen on 21st November in a long and laboured attempt to palliate his formidable colleague's misdemeanour; but when, only ten days later, Palmerston dealt behind backs in the French crisis, he could find no further excuse for him. When the House of Commons had listened, on 3rd February, to Russell's explanation of Palmerston's dismissal, and to the culprit's dignified but inconclusive defence, men of all parties agreed in considering Palmerston's career to be closed.

So it would have been, had the office he had forfeited been one of secondary importance. There are always dozens of men capable, and scores of men eager, to take over any of the minor departments. The public concerns itself very little about who gets them, and if a man is ousted from such an office, his chance of regaining position is very slender, owing to the crowd of competitors. But there are always certain figures marked out by public opinion for leading parts, and Palmerston was one of these. He had made himself indispensable in public affairs. The temperament which fits a man for these leading parts seldom permits him to accept defeat or punishment patiently. Lord Grey, indeed, nourished no schemes of retaliation upon his colleagues when they drove him from office in 1834; but Palmerston was not a man, as the saying is, "to take it lying down." His opportunity came sooner than anybody expected, and he had not the magnanimity to decline it.

"I should not like to begin with a European war," wrote Lord Granville to Lord Lansdowne on taking over the Foreign Office; yet that was just what had been made extremely probable by the intense suspicion and dislike with which Palmerston had succeeded in inspiring every foreign monarchical government. Even in France, despite

the warmth with which he had welcomed the new order of things there, Great Britain was in the worst of favour, owing to the vehemence with which the English press, and especially the *Times*, condemned the *coup d'état*.[1] There was much anxious speculation about Louis Napoleon's intentions. He might find it expedient to cover up the traces of the *coup d'état* by appealing to the military spirit of the French; indeed, the inspired *Moniteur* plainly advocated the annexation of Belgium, whereof Great Britain was under obligation to maintain the neutral integrity. The President, or those who shaped his course for him, wanted people to forget the means by which he had seized the chief power; the British press would not let them do so; very well, messieurs, then we must devise something to divert your attention.

France was armed to the teeth, for the conscription instituted by the first Napoleon had never been relaxed; but England was ill prepared against invasion. During thirty-seven years of European peace her military forces had been allowed to sink dangerously low. Year by year the Duke of Wellington had warned successive governments against the false economy of reductions, which might at short warning have to be exchanged for precipitate, and therefore ineffective, augmentation. Peel, and after him Russell, could not but admit the force of his representation that the risk of invasion had been "aggravated beyond all calculation by the progress of steam navigation";[2] but both were too deeply committed to retrenchment to find the funds necessary to give it effect. Russell, indeed, intended to put the national defences on a better footing in 1848; but, as he told the House, he had to couple his proposal with one for increased taxation, "which became very unpalatable to the House and to the

[1] Lord Cowley, British Minister in Paris, was discussing on 20th February with President Louis Napoleon the mutual desire of the British and French governments for peace. "There is nothing," said the President, "which can prevent it but the proceedings of your press. If a rupture was to arise on account of its violence, the fault would lie with half-a-dozen individuals" (Lord E. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, i. 67).

[2] *Peel Letters*, iii. 199. See also the present writer's *Life of Wellington*, ii. 356–366, *et passim*.

country, and the Government did not persevere with the proposal."

Now, however, that France and the other great Powers had recovered from the exhaustion of the Napoleonic wars, the dubious intentions of Louis Napoleon brought home to men of all parties that even the "silver streak" gave no adequate warrant of security. There were at this time only 24,000 regular troops in the United Kingdom, a considerable force being occupied in the second Kaffre war in South Africa. The Militia, upon which the Government used to rely to supply the place of troops on active service and to replenish their ranks,[1] had been allowed to vanish after the peace of 1815, enrolment being suspended, and only a few superannuated sergeants kept as permanent staff, with no military duties except to clean some stands of obsolete weapons.

Russell having in February 1852 introduced a Bill to reconstitute a local Militia and to provide for its annual training, Palmerston expressed approval of the measure as a whole, but moved that the Militia should be "regular" instead of "local"—that is, that the regiments should be liable for service in any part of the United Kingdom, instead of only in their individual counties. So practical an amendment commanded the approval of the House, but Russell would not accept it, and, on a division, was beaten by eleven votes. He treated it as a vote of want of confidence and resigned next day (21st February), in order, as Palmerston declared, to avoid a vote of censure on the conduct of the Kaffre war. "I have had my tit-for-tat with John Russell," wrote Palmerston, in great glee, to his brother, "and I turned him out on Friday last." Lord Grey, Colonial Secretary, put all the blame on the Prime Minister's mismanagement. He told the Queen that the Cabinet had never been apprised of the provisions of the Bill, and that he, for one, highly disapproved of them.[2]

Palmerston's revenge, 21st Feb. 1852.

The Queen laid her commands on Lord Derby,[3] who

[1] Between 1803 and 1813 the Militia furnished 100,000 men to the army in the Peninsula, being two-fifths of its entire strength.

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 375.

[3] Lord Stanley had succeeded his father as 14th Earl of Derby in 1851.

undertook to form what he knew could be but a stopgap Government; for, as he told her Majesty, he could not command a majority in the House of Lords and was in a decided minority in the House of Commons. He would not ask for a dissolution, having regard to "the critical circumstances in which the country was placed both at home and abroad."[1]

Lord Derby's First Administration, 22nd Feb.–18th Dec. 1852.

Palmerston declined to join him as Chancellor of the Exchequer, because of Derby's avowed purpose to take the sense of the country on protective duties, so this important post was given to Disraeli, who thus assumed office and leadership of the Commons *per saltum*. Little was known about any other member of the new Cabinet, except old Mr. Herries (aged seventy-four), to whom was committed the affairs of India. The "Who-who" Ministry it was called, arising from a little scene in the House of Lords, where the Duke of Wellington, now extremely deaf, sat with hand to ear, interrogating the Prime Minister about the composition of the new Cabinet. "Who? who?" he exclaimed in plainly audible tones, as each unfamiliar name was shouted to him.

Parliament was dissolved in July, but in the interval the Government succeeded in passing a Militia Bill, which satisfied Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington as Russell's measure had not done. It was opposed by Cobden and the Radicals, but Palmerston warmly supported it, and upon the second reading in the House of Lords Wellington made his last speech.[2]

For the Iron Duke's[3] course was well-nigh run. He

[1] Mr. Herbert Paul blames Lord Derby for shrinking from dissolving Parliament at once, which, as he held opinions favourable to protection, would have been his "more honest, more straightforward" course (*History of Modern England*, i. 251). But when Mr. Paul wrote thus, Prince Albert's memorandum of Derby's interview with the Queen had not been made public (*Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 369).

[2] A week later he moved for a return of the troops carried in the transport *Birkenhead*, which on 25th February was wrecked on a reef near the Cape, with the loss of 438 lives out of 630 persons on board.

[3] This sobriquet so aptly fitted the resolute character and physical energy of the man that its origin is apt to be forgotten. The first iron steamship launched in the Mersey was named the *Duke of Wellington*, and came to be known among seafaring men as the Iron Duke. To transfer the title from the vessel to the veteran was as easy as it was appropriate.

died, as he would have wished, at a short summons, occupied in the public service to the very close of his fourscore and three years. Record, often dubiously authentic, is usually kept of the last words of great leaders. It befitted him whom Disraeli so aptly termed "the sovereign master of duty" that his voice should be latest heard in pronouncing a command. On 14th September he did not get up as usual when he was called at six o'clock. When the servant returned at seven, his master said: "I feel very ill; send for the apothecary." He spoke no more, but sank peacefully and painlessly to rest.

Death of Wellington, 14th Sept. 1852.

For forty years Wellington had been the foremost man in Europe, and therefore in the world. Military experts may appraise Napoleon higher as a commander; but Napoleon had a free hand and the vast resources of conscription, yet Wellington overthrew him with forces of far inferior number. Wellington never left anything to chance, whereas Napoleon repeatedly risked the existence of his armies, and finally lost all. Granted that Napoleon's combinations were without parallel in scale and swiftness, Wellington prevailed against him by resolutely keeping a single purpose in view, while his opponent was constantly altering his aim. To Napoleon war was a pursuit, a game of skill for tremendous stakes; to Wellington it was an onerous duty, to be discharged and be done with.

In pronouncing judgment, usually unfavourable, upon Wellington as a statesman, historians have dwelt too exclusively upon his parliamentary course. Even in that he set and maintained a standard of public conduct too often lost to sight in the murky strife of party. Honest purpose, bluntly proclaimed and dauntlessly followed without regard to mere party expediency, is rarer among parliamentary leaders than a fluent tongue, but it earns in the end a more enduring meed of approval. But the Duke's part in civil life extended far beyond the walls of Parliament. He was a great diplomatist also. His position in Paris during the three critical years after Waterloo is without a parallel in the history of the world. Great conquerors, like Alexander or Napoleon, have swayed the destinies of

men and nations more arbitrarily; but never before or since have the sovereigns of Europe voluntarily and unanimously assigned to the subject of an alien Power complete ascendancy in their councils.

The Iron Duke's character was not of the sort that readily attracts friendship; the faculty and habit of intense concentration upon a single purpose, which was the secret of his great achievement, made him appear stern and even harsh to subordinates and unconciliatory in ordinary intercourse with men, and many officers complained bitterly that, after being associated with him in arduous work for years, the Duke seemed to dismiss them altogether from his thoughts when that work was over. They could not realise how completely his mind had become absorbed in work of another kind. Wellington's *liaisons* were numerous and mostly fleeting; but, besides these, there were two or three women who enjoyed his confidence in a degree which he never bestowed upon any of his own sex.

There was the precedent of Nelson's obsequies to warrant the Queen to command a public funeral for the Duke; but she directed that his body should be kept by a guard of honour until the meeting of Parliament in November, when both Houses decreed that the place of sepulture should be beside Nelson's tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral. It fell to the lot of Disraeli, who had led the Protectionist revolt against Wellington's authority, to move the reply to the Queen's message regarding the funeral. The age of classical quotation had not yet passed away, and Disraeli has been accused of filching part of his speech from Thiers's eulogy upon the Maréchal Saint-Cyr; be that as it may, nothing could have been more felicitous than the analogy he suggested with another soldier-statesman—Stilicho, the great captain and Minister of Honorius. "Who," he asked, "can ever forget that classic and venerable head, white with time and radiant with glory—*Stilichonis apex et cognita fulsit canities!*"[1]

[1] It is doubtful whether Claudian's allusion in this passage was not to Stilicho's white plume, like the *panache blanc* of Henry IV., rather than to his white hair.

All the great Powers were represented at the funeral, save one. That one was not France, for Louis Napoleon had directed Count Walewski to attend in token that Waterloo had left no sore; it was Austria that was conspicuous in the absence of her ambassador from St. Paul's, for the House of Hapsburg was still brooding over its grievance against Palmerston.[1] But Wellington was an Austrian field-marshal, and the Emperor held a funeral parade in Vienna, where twelve batteries sounded the requiem of the greatest Englishman.

"In the mountains of Nepaul the same sad tribute was rendered by the Maharajah, while in Mysore the Rajah not only fired minute guns in his honour, but even caused the Dusserah, the great Hindoo festival, to be stopped throughout the city." [2]

Wellington had been the instrument in the overthrow of the French Empire; strange that it should have been on the very day of his death that President Louis Napoleon set out from Paris on a tour in order to test the mind of the people about its restoration. Everywhere he was gratified by shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" [3] In the plebiscite which followed 7,824,189 votes were cast for Napoleon III., and only 253,145 against him; scarcely could surer warrant of permanence be accorded to any form of government, yet was it fated that this second empire should last only twice as long as the first.

Restoration of the French Empire, 2nd Dec. 1852.

[1] In September 1850 the Austrian Marshal Haynau came to England, bringing with him a reputation for desperate cruelty, especially against women, in dealing with the insurgent Hungarians. He paid a visit to Barclay's brewery, where the workmen, easily recognising him by his enormous moustache, set upon him and tried to cut it off. The Marshal, badly bruised and with torn clothes, escaped into a public-house, whence he was rescued by the police. The Austrian chargé d'affaires demanded redress: Palmerston offered an official apology, but wrote privately at the same time to Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary, that "instead of striking him [Haynau], they ought to have tossed him in a blanket, rolled him in the kennel, and then sent him home in a cab, paying his fare to the hotel."

[2] Lord Dalhousie to Queen Victoria, 23rd Nov.

[3] An amusing incident of this tour is told in a letter from Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians. It occurred on Louis Napoleon entering Paris at the close of his tour. "Under one of the triumphal arches a crown was suspended . . . over which was written: *Il l'a bien merité.* Something damaged the crown and they removed it; leaving, however, *the rope* and superscription!" (*Letters*, ii. 397.)

Immediately after the proclamation of Louis Napoleon as Emperor Napoleon III., on 2nd December, the anniversary of the *coup d'état*, his ambassador, Count Walewski, made known to Lord Malmesbury his master's earnest desire to make such a marriage as should strengthen the friendship between England and France, and his wish to know how Queen Victoria would regard his contracting a marriage with her niece, Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe. When Malmesbury submitted this proposal to the Queen, her Majesty told Lord Derby that he ought to have saved her from the necessity for giving a direct answer to such an embarrassing request; because, based as it was upon an intention to promote *l'entente cordiale*, anything short of warm approval might "have consequences disadvantageous to our political relations with France, and injurious to the Queen's reputation." She desired her Foreign Secretary to inform the French Ambassador that she felt "bound to leave the consideration and decision of so serious a proposal to the unbiassed judgment of the parents of the Princess and the Princess herself."[1]

Napoleon III.'s matrimonial project, 1852.

Readers will not fail to recognise herein a modern and feminine note. Hitherto the nuptials of crowned heads had been arranged with exclusive view to political or dynastic expediency; Queen Victoria herself had shown active interest in the imbroglio of the Spanish marriages.[2] The Emperor's avowed object in proposing this marriage was one to which the British Government should not—could not—be indifferent. Napoleon, indeed, was but an Emperor of yester eve; but he had the French people at his back. Nettled as he was already by the delay of the Great Powers in formally recognising his dignity, how would he brook being told that his proposal, like that of any private gentleman, was one to be accepted or rejected by the Princess and her parents?[3]

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 408, 422.

[2] See p. 173, *supra*.

[3] The Emperor showed no resentment at what he might have taken as a slight, having fallen ardently in love with the beautiful Mlle. Eugénie de Montijo, whom he married in the following month, 30th January 1853.

That these considerations were present to Queen Victoria is amply shown by her confidential correspondence; that they were outweighed by what an eighteenth-century writer would call her "sensibility," she was conscious also, and felt misgivings at this time about her capacity, or the capacity of any woman, for sovereign rule.[1] Yet, as she lived to know, it was precisely this feminine leaven and domestic bias which, combined with tact and common sense, did more than anything else to endear her to her people and redeem monarchy as an institution from the discredit into which it had been plunged.

Lord Derby's Government derived no strength from the general election which took place in July without effecting appreciable change in the strength of parties or giving a working majority to either of them. Parliament met on 4th November; on 3rd December Disraeli introduced his second budget in a speech which lasted five hours and pleased neither Protectionists nor Free Traders, both of whom had been apprehensive about the financial policy in store for them. Increase of the house-tax and renewal of the income-tax were the chief expedients whereby he proposed to avoid a deficit. On the fourth night of debate Disraeli rose again to reply to assailants from almost every quarter of the House. Feeling that he was fighting a lost battle, he gave his tongue the rein and indulged in so many personalities that it was an angry House in which he concluded at two in the morning of 11th December. Immediately one leapt to his feet whom Macaulay had described in 1838 as "the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories who follow reluctantly and mutinously a leader [Peel] whose experience is indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor." William Ewart Gladstone had sat in Parliament

[1] "Albert grows daily fonder of politics and business . . . and I grow daily to dislike them both more and more. We women are not *made* for governing; and if we are good women, we must *dislike* these masculine occupations" (Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians, 3rd February 1852). . . . "I am every day more convinced that we women, if we are to be good women, feminine and amiable and domestic, are not fitted to reign; at least it is *contre gré* that they drive themselves to the work which it entails" (the same to the same, 17th February).

for more than twenty years, and had earned a name for power and poignancy of speech; but it was not until now that the House of Commons came under the full influence of his superb command of phrase, his impressive use of gesture, his flexible and singularly resonant voice. In accents shaken by passion and amid constant interruption from an excited audience, he made vehement protest against the personalities to which they had just listened:—

"I must tell the right hon. gentleman that, whatever he has learnt, he has not learnt the limits of discretion, of moderation and forbearance, that ought to restrain the conduct and language of every member of this House, the disregard of which would be an offence in the meanest among us, but which is an offence of tenfold weight in the leader of the House of Commons."

Thus was the gage of battle flung down between these two champions, who had ridden together in the ranks of Peel and Wellington, but were henceforth to hold no truce and grant no quarter for nearly thirty years to come.

Defeat and resignation of Government, 11th Dec. 1852.

The House divided so soon as Gladstone sat down; Disraeli's budget was rejected by a majority of nineteen votes, and Lord Derby resigned at once.

CHAPTER XI

The Marquess of Dalhousie—Murder of British officers in Múltán—The Second Sikh War—Battle of Ramnuggur—Siege of Múltán—Battle of Chilianwala—Annexation of the Punjab—First Burmese War—Second Burmese War—The affairs of Oudh—Annexation of Oudh.

No modern Englishman—at least none with any understanding of the burden of rule—can view without concern the continual expansion of the Empire, involving the subjugation of alien races and the annexation of fresh territory. The obligation to do so is irresistible: that which has been won by the sword must be kept by the sword, and frontier wars force themselves upon governments for the protection of those citizens of the Empire who have ventured life and fortune under protection of the flag. Brief as was Lord Derby's first administration, before he left office the Eastern dominion of the Crown had been largely added to, although neither he nor any of his Cabinet colleagues can be deemed to have had much hand in doing so. The annexation of Lower Burmah was an act in the administration of one whose character and policy were utterly averse from aggression, whose whole aim and ambition lay in the peaceful development of the dominion entrusted to him, and the amelioration of the condition of its complex population.

James Ramsay, tenth Earl and first Marquess of Dalhousie, had served in Peel's administration as Vice-President of the Board of Trade under Mr. Gladstone, whom he succeeded as President in 1844. Those were days of feverish speculation in railways, and, besides devoting intense personal scrutiny to the myriad schemes submitted to his department,[1] Dalhousie undertook the conduct of debates on the Corn Laws in the House of Lords during the memorable session

Marquess of Dalhousie, 1812-60.

[1] He established the railway department at the Board of Trade, and in a single year dealt with no fewer than 332 schemes, involving capital to the amount of £271,000,000.

of 1846. On the fall of Peel's Ministry in that year, Russell persuaded this young Conservative peer to retain the office he had administered so admirably, until in 1848 he offered him the governor-generalship of India in succession to Lord Hardinge.

At that time Dalhousie was only six-and-thirty, but his constitution had been sapped by five years of excessive labour. Nevertheless he entered upon his new sphere with a spirit, and administered its affairs in a manner, which earned him rank with the greatest and wisest of Indian rulers, as well as a full share of that bitter animosity which men of lofty aim and vigorous action may hardly escape under our system of parliamentary government.

The first Sikh war, ending in 1846 with the establishment of Dhuleep Singh as Mahárájá under British protection, has been given in outline already.[1] Hardinge appointed Henry Lawrence as resident at the court of Lahore, and John Lawrence to administer the territory ceded by the Sikhs. It were hard to say whether wisdom or good fortune had most to do with his choice of agents: certain it is that no names shine brighter in our Indian annals than those of the brothers Lawrence; all too narrow the limits of this page for their fitting eulogy.[2]

When Hardinge resigned in 1848, so well satisfied was he with the manner in which the Lawrences had gained the confidence of the Sikhs that he told Dalhousie, his successor, that there would be no need to fire a shot in India for five years to come. This forecast was falsified before the new Governor-General had been in office three months. Early in April Mr. Vans Agnew of the Civil Service and Lieutenant Anderson of the Bombay Fusiliers were sent to instal Sirdar Khan Singh as governor of the important fortress of Múltán, in place of Mulráj, the former governor. They were escorted by Sikh cavalry, Gurkha infantry and artillery—500 in all—and accomplished the ceremony of transfer quietly at sunrise on 19th April; but as they

[1] See pp. 135-137, *supra*.

[2] Henry Lawrence fell at Lucknow in 1857; John Lawrence became Viceroy of India in 1863–69, was created Baron Lawrence in 1869, and died in 1879.

were riding back to their encampment, accompanied by Mulráj, Vans Agnew was attacked and desperately wounded by a Sepoy, and Anderson was cut down by Mulráj's horsemen. Both officers were taken to their quarters by their escort; but by evening of next day, all the escort having deserted except eight or ten of the cavalry, the city rabble forced a way in, hacked off the heads of the wounded officers, and laid them at the feet of Mulráj. This was afterwards ascertained to be the premature outburst of an organised revolt; it was imperative that the crime should be promptly avenged, which might have averted the rebellion. But Lord Gough declined to move a column from Firózepur during the hot weather; Dalhousie, having only three months' experience of India, hesitated to overrule the judgment of a general with so high a reputation as Gough had earned; presently the whole Punjab was in arms, with Mulráj at the head of the insurgents, and the second Sikh war had begun.

Murder of British political agents, 19th April 1848.

The Second Sikh War, 1848-49.

It is one of the penalties involved upon the writer who has undertaken to be succinct that he may not pause to dwell upon deeds of individual heroism, even when such deeds materially affect the course of history. The narrative of British India is woven out of the devotion and prompt courage of subordinates quite as much as from acts of lofty statesmanship and the genius of great generals. To describe in detail the services rendered on crucial occasions by this or that officer or civilian, would involve injustice to the memory of many others equally deserving the meed of fame. But it were a mere parody of history to refer to the campaign now opening without mentioning the name of Herbert Edwardes,[1] a lieutenant in the Company's service, acting as political agent at Futteh-khan, west of the Indus. A line from the wounded Agnew having reached him, Edwardes replied with a promise of instant succour. Without waiting for sanction from headquarters, nor for the more agreeable weather needed to tempt Lord Gough from his arm-chair, Edwardes, acting on his own responsibility, got together a force of

[1] Afterwards Major-General Sir H. Edwardes, K.C.B., died in 1868.

Pathans and other tribesmen, obtained a strong contingent from Nawab Khan, the friendly raja of Bahawulpúr, and took the field against Mulráj. "I am like a terrier barking at a tiger," he wrote; nevertheless, having got together 12,000 native troops, he inflicted two defeats upon Mulráj, without receiving the slightest aid or countenance from the seat of government, Gough still persuading the Governor-General that British troops must never move out of cantonments in the hot weather.[1]

At last, on 18th August, General Whish was allowed to lay siege to Múltán. It was 21st November before Gough arrived to take command; next day he advanced to attack the enemy at Ramnuggur, both banks of the river being held by the Sikhs. The old man was wide awake now, and, when he struck, he drove it home.

General Cureton was sent forward with the 3rd Dragoons and three regiments of light cavalry, supported by Horse Artillery, to dislodge the enemy from the left bank. This was accomplished, but with deplorable loss, Colonel Havelock falling at the head of the 14th Light Dragoons, and General Cureton also losing his life. On 2nd December Gough crossed the Chenab, the enemy retiring before him towards the north-west.

Battle of Ramnuggur, 22nd Nov. 1848.

It is impossible to speak too warmly of the splendid defence of Múltán by the Sikhs under Mulráj. General Whish had 150 guns with him, and on 29th December was bombarding the city walls at eighty yards range. On the 30th the principal magazine in the citadel blew up, setting the town in flames. Still the brave garrison fought on. The bombardment was maintained without a break for fifty hours; the wreck of what had once been a town was taken by assault on 2nd January 1849; but the citadel held out until the 21st, when, two great breaches having been made in the walls, Mulráj surrendered unconditionally. When his garrison, less than 4000 men, marched into the British lines to lay down their arms, he was the last man to leave the fort, dressed in gorgeous silks, splendidly armed, riding a superb Arab with a scarlet saddle-cloth. Sunset splendour,

Siege of Múltán, 18th Aug. 1848–21st Jan. 1849.

[1] *Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration*, by Sir E. Arnold, vol. i. pp. 80–102.

perhaps, but it was the sunset of a great soldier, not that of the cause. Our generals had yet to learn the extraordinary resolution and resources of this noble race of warriors.

Chuttur Singh, with his son Shere Singh, still were in the field with 40,000 men and 62 guns, and had captured the fortress of Attock, defended by Major Herbert. On 13th January Gough attacked them in their position on the Upper Jhelum, near the village of Chilianwála, a name of sombre memories for the British arms. The Sikhs indeed withdrew from the field, but they carried with them four of Gough's guns and five stands of colours. Besides these, the British lost 26 officers and 731 men killed, 66 officers and 1446 men wounded. In the political atmosphere of India it would be fatal to condone the general who incurred such a slur upon British prestige. Gough was in his seventieth year; not to be too harshly censured, therefore, for faulty generalship, but not to be allowed the chance of repeating it; recalled, therefore, forthwith, and Sir Charles Napier to take his place.

Battle of Chilianwála, 13th Jan. 1849.

But Fortune had still a favour left for this brave old soldier. Before orders from home could reach him, Gough had overtaken the enemy at Gujrát on 21st February, and inflicted upon him so crushing a defeat, pursuing him into the Khoree Pass, that on 6th March Shere Singh laid down his arms, and on 29th Lord Dalhousie issued a proclamation permanently annexing the Punjab to the British Empire.

Annexation of the Punjab, 29th March 1849.

It was an act contrary to the Governor-General's inclination, but he justified it in a lengthy document, setting forth the reasons which forced him to the conclusion that Sikh dominion in the Land of the Five Waters was no longer compatible with British rule in the rest of India:—

"Not content with making war themselves upon the British, the Sikhs have laboured to induce other states and sovereigns in India to attack us also. . . . Although the Government of India did not desire, and ought not to desire, the conquest of the Punjab, I do not wish by any means to convey to you the impression that I regard the Punjab as a possession which it would be seriously difficult for us to maintain, or which would be financially unprofit-

able. . . . The Sikh people form comparatively a small portion of the population of the Punjab. A large proportion of the inhabitants, and especially the Mahomedan people, peaceful in their habits and occupations, will hail the introduction of our rule with pleasure. . . . What I have done I have done with a clear conscience, and in the honest belief that it was imperatively demanded of me by my duty to the State."[1]

Act as he might, Dalhousie could not stay the path of conquest. One of the historians of his administration denies that he had any strong desire to do so:—

"It is clear that, after his taste of conquest in the Five Waters, a new spirit seized the Marquis of Dalhousie. What may be called a passion for imperial symmetry undoubtedly possessed him, and grew as he gazed upon the map of India."[2]

Sir E. Arnold supports this diagnosis by certain extracts from Dalhousie's correspondence; but Dalhousie by his own act has withheld from our cognisance that which may, before long, lay the secret motives of his policy in the light of day.[3]

The next state with which the Indian Government came into collision was the powerful kingdom of Burmah.

Already, in the first Burmese war, Lower Burmah had been conquered after two years of hard fighting under Sir Archibald Campbell and Commodore Grant; but on peace being declared in 1826, the country was evacuated by the British, and Rangoon was restored under the treaty of Yandabo.

First Burmese War, 1824–26.

Relations continued tolerably amicable so long as the old King of Ava remained on the throne; but in 1837 he was ousted by his brother, a violent and cruel despot, under whose rule the British resident at Ava found it impossible to continue his functions, wherefore he was

[1] Lord Dalhousie's despatch, printed in Arnold's *Administration*, i. 205–219.

[2] Arnold's *Dalhousie Administration*, ii. 11.

[3] In a codicil to his will he directed that all letters and private papers found in his repositories should be delivered to his daughter, Lady Susan Bourke; and, at her demise, to the holder of the title of Dalhousie, coupled with the injunction that none of these papers, nor any part of the full journal which Dalhousie kept throughout his life, should be made public until fifty years after his death. The fifty years come to an end in 1910.

withdrawn in 1840. For some years after that the officers and seamen of British merchant ships suffered frequently from violence in the port of Rangoon, and all demands for reparation were treated with contempt by Pagán-men, who had succeeded his father, King Kongboungmen, in 1846. Matters came to a climax in 1851, when two British merchant captains were arrested upon charges alleged to be fictitious and detained in prison until they consented to pay to the Governor of Rangoon £100 and £70 respectively. The victims of these and other acts of oppression having laid complaint before the Indian Government, accompanied by claims for compensation amounting to £5300, Commodore Lambert was sent with three ships to investigate the truth, and if necessary to demand proper redress from the Governor. Should the Governor decline to deal fairly in the matter, Lambert was authorised to forward a letter laying the case before the King of Ava.

Lambert, landing at Rangoon in November 1851, was immediately waited upon by a body of British residents, who laid so many fresh complaints against the Governor that he considered it would be useless to apply to that official. He therefore communicated the demand of his Government direct to the King of Ava. The Burmese Government showed much anxiety to comply with what was required of it: the Governor of Rangoon was replaced by a new one, and full compensation would be paid presently.

The new Governor arrived on 4th January 1852; on the 6th Lambert sent a junior officer, Commander Fishbourne, to negotiate a settlement. The Governor seems to have resented this as a gross breach of etiquette, and refused to receive Fishbourne. Lambert, ignorant, perhaps, of the enormous importance attached to etiquette by Orientals, acted with unwarrantable precipitancy. He declared a blockade of Rangoon, seized a ship belonging to the King of Ava, and on 10th January anchored his own vessel, the *Fox*, off a stockade battery in the river. The Burmese garrison, pardonably misunderstanding this demonstration, opened fire on the *Fox*. Lambert silenced the battery, and destroyed some war-vessels in the river.

Next came a demand from the Governor-General for an apology from the Governor of Rangoon for his insulting conduct to an accredited British envoy and for payment of the promised indemnity. You shall have both, was in effect the reply of the Burmese Government; but give us back our king's ship which you have unlawfully taken. Before this point could be settled the British had got themselves pretty well hated by the Burmese. Lambert, passing up the river with despatches from Calcutta for the Governor of Rangoon, once more drew the fire of the stockade battery. Unfortunately, Dalhousie and his Council failed to realise that the reappearance of the *Fox* in the river was interpreted on shore as an act of war. The commander of the fort had received no intimation of Lambert's pacific errand; he only recognised him as the pirate who had stolen a king's ship.

This series of blunders and misunderstandings was leading up to a deplorable issue. On 18th February Dalhousie sent an ultimatum to King Pagán-men, demanding an apology, an indemnity of £100,000 in addition to the original compensation, and the dismissal of the new Governor of Rangoon, giving him till 1st April to fulfil these terms. The Burmese Government, though they did not refuse to comply, showed no sign of doing so, and Dalhousie prepared to enforce his demand by arms.

Second Burmese War, 1852.

It can scarcely be doubted that, had Dalhousie been somewhat less peremptory at first, war might have been avoided. Other governors-general had received frequent complaints of the treatment of British merchants and seamen in Rangoon, and refrained from taking action, setting the profits of the trade against its unpleasant incidents. But once Dalhousie had made his demand, he had no alternative but to insist upon compliance. He had laid to heart the lesson of Múltán; he felt that every act of his Government was keenly watched from every native court in India; delay or apparent vacillation might involve him not in one war only but in several wars.[1] Punctually on 2nd April, Major-

[1] This explanation of Dalhousie's motives seems more in accord with his character than that offered by Sir E. Arnold, who considers that Dalhousie's

General Godwin, who had served in the first Burmese war, arrived at the mouth of the Irrawaddy with infantry and artillery; on the 12th, acting in concert with a squadron under Rear-Admiral Austen, he landed his troops for an attack upon Rangoon, which, after three days' hard fighting, surrendered when the Great Pagoda had been stormed. The other chief towns of Lower Burmah fell during the summer and autumn, and on 20th December the whole province of Pegu was annexed to the British Empire by the Governor-General's proclamation. Nobody with any sense desired this vast conquest; Peel had deplored that of Sind as "a dead weight and a serious cause of anxiety."[1] The province of Pegu covers 88,500 square miles, about seventeen times the area acquired from France by Germany in 1871. It would be a comforting reflection if, looking back upon this act of annexation, we could assure our children that, as it was to be in 1871, so in 1852 the loser was the original aggressor. Sometimes one is inclined to sigh for the conditions of Swiss nationality, perpetual immunity from invasion and no occasion for conquest.

Not yet was the tide of conquest stayed. Nagpore and Bundelcund (Jhansi) were annexed in 1854, owing to the failure of heirs to their thrones;[2] there remains to be noticed briefly the last and greatest of Dalhousie's acts of annexation, which has been more gravely condemned than all the rest.

In tracing the growth of British territory in India, Sir

scheme was "to absorb those independent States which broke the map, and to complete the coast line, wherever the crimson edge was interrupted, from Kurrachee to the Straits of Sunda" (*Administration*, ii. 13). He charges Dalhousie with being too slow in appealing to arms in 1848, and too precipitate in 1852.

[1] *Peel Letters*, ii. 274.

[2] Early in his administration Dalhousie wrote as follows: "I take occasion of recording my strong and deliberate opinion, that, in the exercise of a wise and sound policy, the British Government is bound not to put aside or to neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate states, by the failure of all heirs of any description whatsoever, or from the failure of heirs natural, where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the Government being given to the ceremony of adoption according to Hindoo law." It was the withholding of that sanction by the paramount power, and the consequent annexation of Sattara in 1849, of Jhansi in 1853, and of Nagpúr in 1854, that formed a chief article in Sir E. Arnold's indictment against Dalhousie's administration (vol. ii. 129–170).

Edwin Arnold employs a curious and pungent metaphor to illustrate the process. Citing the well-known habits of the ichneumon fly, which deposits an egg in the body of some other living insect, whence is hatched a worm that feeds upon the tissues of its unwilling host and finally destroys it, he continues: "Our Government in India has frequently laid such an egg in the shape of 'a contingent' within the confines of friendly states."[1] Such an egg was laid in the principality of Oudh under the treaty of 1798. Three years later, when the Nawáb Sáadat Alí Khán was threatened with invasion by the advance of Tamán Sháh to the Indus, a second treaty was concluded whereby the Nawáb was allowed to commute the annual payment of £113,000 for the expenses of the British garrison, and certain other charges, for part of his territory which was ceded to the East India Company "in perpetual sovereignty," binding himself and his successors by the same treaty to maintain good government in his remaining dominions, and to advise with and act upon the council of the Company's officers. On the other hand, the British Government undertook the defence of the Nawáb and his dominion against all enemies, foreign or domestic. Repeatedly during the ensuing fifty years the Mahomedan rulers[2] of this Hindú nationality owed the maintenance of their position to the suppression of mutiny and rebellion by the British Contingent; but Sáadat's successors made no attempt to fulfil their part of the compact. Their sole care seemed to be to enrich themselves by the harshest methods of exaction from their miserable subjects; while the country was distracted by bloody conflicts between the *tálukdárs*, or Hindú landowners, much as Scotland suffered in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries from the feuds of Lowland barons and the raids of Highland clans. It came to this, then, that British troops were constantly employed in support of the cruelly oppressive exactions of a thoroughly vicious and incapable court.

The affairs of Oudh, 1798–1855.

In 1831 Lord William Bentinck warned the King of Oudh that his country would be taken from him unless he

[1] Arnold's *Dalhousie Administration*, ii. 131.

[2] In 1814 the Nawáb-Vizír assumed the title of King of Oudh.

reformed his government. The warning was repeated by Lord Hardinge in 1847. The king was told plainly that within two years there must be an end to misrule, either through reforms undertaken by himself or by his removal from the throne. Dalhousie, succeeding Hardinge, found matters ever growing worse; the sufferings of the people increasing with the necessities of the court, while the tálukdárs were constantly inventing new tortures to enforce their exactions withal.[1] The period of grace came to an end; but Dalhousie would not take action without satisfying himself as to the condition of the people of Oudh. He called for a report from Colonel Sleeman, whom he had appointed Resident at Lucknow, and that officer spent nearly two years upon investigation. His report, delivered at the end of 1851, left the Governor-General under no illusion either as to the odious character of the tyranny which British troops were employed to maintain, or as to the hopelessness of any reform so long as the existing government was allowed to stand. Chronic debauchery had reduced the king almost to imbecility; rule had passed into the hands of eunuchs and fiddlers, who were amassing enormous fortunes; people of all classes were longing for the British to take over the administration. Never was there clearer occasion for annexation in the interest of an oppressed nation.

Still Dalhousie held his hand. The kings of Oudh, disastrous as their rule had proved to their own subjects, had been faithful vassals to the Crown of Britain. The beauty and natural richness of their territory made him scrupulous lest any taint of cupidity should affect his policy. He would not have it hinted (as afterwards it was loudly affirmed) that he had employed Sleeman to pronounce a foregone conclusion. Not until he had appointed General

[1] "Rugbhur Singh is quoted by Colonel Sleeman as a good specimen of these Oudh lords. . . . He farmed the districts of Bondee and Bahraetch from the Court; and because the rajah of the first-named place would not pay the additional tax which he demanded, he razed his town, harried 5000 of his cattle, and tortured 1000 of his townspeople. For six weeks he superintended the torments—rubbing beards with wet gunpowder and firing them; searing tender parts of the body with hot ramrods, or mutilating it with knives and tearing out tongues with pincers." (Arnold's *Dalhousie Administration*, ii. 344.)

James Outram, the avowed champion of native dynasties,[1] to succeed Sleeman as resident at Lucknow, and had received from him ample confirmation of the horrors daily enacted upon the people,[2] would he consent to stronger measures against the Court of Oudh. Outram, much against his inclination ("for I have ever advocated the maintenance of the few remaining native States"), reluctantly recommended annexation as the only deliverance for five millions of suffering Hindús. Dalhousie still felt averse from that *ultima ratio;* he could not get over the objection that such a course, however sincerely adopted for the welfare of the people, would derive the appearance of aggression from the immense revenue accruing to the Indian Government.

He proposed that the king should remain on the throne, but that the whole civil and military administration of his realm should be vested in the East India Company. If the king declined these terms, then British troops should be withdrawn at once, when the unruly tálukdárs and the general mass of the people could soon make a clean sweep of the Mohammedan Court and the human vermin infesting it. The Court of Directors were for annexation outright. In the end they agreed that a new treaty should be presented to the King of Oudh, transferring the entire administration of the country to the Indian Government. Should the king consent to sign the treaty he was to retain sovereign rank, with a suitable revenue and the

[1] He had incurred Sir Charles Napier's wrath and coarse abuse for advocating a pacific policy towards the Amir of Sind in 1843 (see *Life of Sir C. Napier*, ii. 296–324), and felt so strongly against the war that he declined his share in the prize money.

[2] Rugbhur Singh, mentioned above in Sleeman's report, being in want of cash, seized 500 women and sold them by auction. Another tálukdár, Saccaram, in the course of a raid killed four men, and buried a fifth up to the neck in the ground. He then caused his ears to be filled with powder and fired. New and ingenious torments were constantly being invented, but none was found more effective than the old one of putting a man's wrist between split bamboos, which were tightened every day. If the wretched creature could not or would not pay the sum required of him, the hand eventually dropped off. The only purpose in recalling these sickening cruelties is to refresh the memories or inform the minds of those who feel qualms about the presence of the British in India. They have dethroned some despots and pensioned off some dynasties, but they have redeemed millions of their fellow-creatures from chronic misery.

"Palace of Heart's Delight" as a residence. If he demurred to these conditions he was to be deposed at once.

A column of troops was marched to Lucknow; there arose no occasion to employ them. The king refused the treaty; but neither in the country nor the capital was an arm raised in defence of a dynasty which had earned nothing but abhorrence. In February 1856 the Court of Directors were able to record that a territory of 25,000 square miles had "passed from its native prince to the Queen of England without the expenditure of a drop of blood, and almost without a murmur."

Annexation of Oudh, 18th Feb. 1856.

With whatever misgiving one may contemplate the means whereby some parts of our Indian Empire were acquired, none need arise in connection with the annexation of Oudh. England, the paramount power in India, could not continue to employ troops in upholding anarchy and hideous oppression in a State contiguous to her own dominions. Dalhousie's correspondence proves that to the last he strove to avert the necessity for dethroning the king. But that Dalhousie was a Conservative peer was enough, it seems, to cause his administration to stink in the nostrils of thoroughgoing Liberals. If I turn aside once more to rebut the suggestions of the late Sir Spencer Walpole, it is in order to show with how great caution should be received the teaching even of so able a historian when he stoops to the sorely trampled arena of party.

"The political party which has walked in Wellesley's footsteps in India has not displayed much eagerness to terminate misrule nearer home. The year in which England used its might to terminate misrule in Oudh was the same year in which she employed her whole power to maintain a government, far worse than that of Oudh, in Turkey. . . . The true reason for the annexation of Oudh is not to be found in any State paper, and was not based on any moral code. Oudh was annexed because British interests seemed to require its annexation, and Turkey was maintained because British interests seemed to require its preservation."

And what stronger, better justification, the amazed reader may ask, need be sought for either of these acts of State? To what nobler motive shall a statesman own than the furtherance of the interests of his country? Let the

answer to Sir Spencer Walpole's ungenerous imputation come from the writings of a dispassionate foreigner, the Frenchman Lanoye.[1]

"En Decembre 1855 le marquis de Dalhousie couronna la longue et glorieuse série de ses actes administratifs en décrêtant la suppression de la monarchie de l'Aoude et sa réduction en province indo-anglaise. Il est fort possible que cette mesure soit contraire aux textes des traités, au droit des gens selon Grotius et Puffendorf, mais à coup sûr elle est conforme aux droits de l'humanité et de la civilisation. Une royante grotesquement sénile et impuissante pour le bien, une cour infectée de tous les genres de corruption et décrépitude, une capitale empestée des souffles impurs de Sodome et Gomorrhe; des campagnes livrées au pillage, au meurtre et à l'incendie, et la population agricole journellement décimée et mise à rançon pour ses membres et pour son sang par des bandes impunies de chauffeurs . . . tels étaient les scandales auxquels le décret de lord Dalhousie a mis un terme, et qui ont trouvé en Europe des défenseurs officieux."

Dalhousie had reached no more than middle age: he was only three-and-forty, but his health was shattered. His regular term of office lapsed in 1852; he had continued to serve at the earnest request of the Court of Directors and the Cabinet; he now wrote to Queen Victoria asking that she would "permit him to resign the great office which he held, before he ceases to command the strength which is needed to sustain it."[2] He handed over the government to Lord Canning in March 1856, and lived only four years after his return to England.

Ampler space than I can command would be needed to analyse the principles and results of Dalhousie's eight years of rule. Lamentably incomplete must be any narrative thereof which takes no note of anything but conquest and annexation. It is from the crowded list of reforms instituted by him that his fame derives its clearest lustre. He introduced railways and the telegraph, spreading roads through the Punjab, the Himalayas, and Lower Burmah; he instituted primary education for the people, and threw open the Civil Service to all subjects of the Crown, irrespectively of skin-colour. The record of these and other beneficent acts may be read elsewhere.

[1] Quoted by Sir E. Arnold, *Dalhousie Administration*, ii. 376.

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 114.

CHAPTER XII

Lord Aberdeen's coalition Ministry—Repeal of the Transportation Act—"The Sick Man"—Project of the Emperor Nicholas—The dispute about the Holy Places—The Russians cross the Pruth—Turkey declares war against Russia—Destruction of the Turkish fleet—War declared by Great Britain—Turkish successes—Battle of the Alma—Siege of Sebastopol—Battle of Balaklava—Critical position of the allies—Battle of Inkerman—Fall of the coalition Government—Death of the Emperor Nicholas—Florence Nightingale—Death of Lord Raglan—Fall of Sebastopol.

THE Derby administration having foundered, the Queen might most naturally have sent for Lord John Russell, so lately her First Minister. So, at least, thought one man, to wit, Russell himself. But the Peelites, being directly responsible for the crisis, had to be reckoned with; how would some of them relish Russell as generalissimo? They were at one with him about free trade; but for franchise reform, whereon he had set his heart, they had no desire whatever. So Lord Derby advised the Queen to send for Lord Lansdowne, saying that if she sent for Lord Aberdeen it would mean ruin to the Conservative party, half of whom would go any lengths with the Radicals to wreck a Peelite ministry. Here Prince Albert interrupted Lord Derby, reminding him that, constitutionally, it did not rest with him to give advice, the Sovereign alone being responsible in the choice of a new Minister.[1] In the end, Lansdowne being seventy-two and gouty, Aberdeen, only four years his junior, undertook to form a coalition. Russell, after firmly declining it, ended by taking the Foreign Office, with the lead of the House of Commons, "which," Aberdeen told the Queen, "made him virtually as much Prime Minister as he pleased . . . following the precedent of Mr. Fox."

Lord Aberdeen's Ministry, 1852–55.

That was one difficulty out of the way; there remained a more formidable one in the person of Lord Palmerston, "whom we agreed it would be imprudent to leave to

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 413.

combine in opposition with Mr. Disraeli."[1] At first he refused all overtures; had not he and Aberdeen, old Harrow school-mates as they were, been tilting at each other for years? He would remain a free-lance, unshackled by office or party. Then he repented and, through Lansdowne's mediation, consented to take the Home Office. After that Aberdeen's task was an easy one; plenty of talent to be had for the asking. Gladstone, Graham, Sidney Herbert, and the Duke of Newcastle were plumes in the Peelite wing; the Liberal contingent was made up by Russell, Lord Chancellor Cranworth, Lord Granville, the Duke of Argyll, Palmerston, Sir Charles Wood, and Lansdowne. Sir William Molesworth had the distinction of being the first Radical admitted to the Cabinet. "Wonderfully strong in point of ability," observed the diarist Greville, "in this respect a marked contrast to the last [Cabinet]; but its very excellence in this respect may prove a source of weakness, and eventually of disunion."

The new Government began well. Their most important achievement in the session of 1853 was an Act substituting penal servitude for transportation. For more than sixty years the Australasian colonies had been used as a convenient dumping ground for criminals. The system had much to recommend it, being cheap and easy—cheap, because colonial governments amply indemnified themselves by employing convict labour on roads, bridges, and other works of permanent public value; and easy, because the home Government, having thrust the undesirables out of sight, could afford to put them out of mind also.

Repeal of the Transportation Act, 1853.

On higher grounds, also, deportation could be justified as removing criminals from the scenes of their offences and affording them opportunity for a fresh start in new environment at the expiry of their terms of punishment. But, just as waste products may be disposed of for a time by the simple and primitive methods of the gutter and the rubbish heap, and yet become with the growth of the community a source of danger and intolerable offence, so did the accumulation of criminal sewage at the antipodes require to be

[1] Memorandum by Prince Albert (*Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 415).

drastically dealt with. The question was the more pressing because, owing to the growing leniency of the British penal code, thousands of criminals who would formerly have ceased from troubling on the gallows were now shipped off to the colonies.[1]

The Lord Chancellor, in moving the second reading of his Bill repealing the Transportation Act, admitted that his experience on the bench had convinced him that transportation was the most effective punishment that could be devised, being the strongest deterrent, short of a capital sentence, which could be employed without the infliction of physical pain. Had the United Kingdom only been concerned, he would never have proposed to discontinue that form of punishment, but the interest of the colonies had to be considered. The recent remarkable discovery of gold in Australia had altered the character of the community and greatly added to the population; the remonstrance of colonial governments could no longer be disregarded. It reads strangely at this day that the Government of Western Australia desired to continue as a penal settlement, in order to profit, of course, by convict labour; wherefore provision was made in the Bill that a number of criminals, estimated at 800 to 1000 annually, should be deported to that settlement. Lord Grey and Lord Derby both expressed apprehension of serious results to be expected from the retention and ultimate release of convicts within the United Kingdom; but the Bill passed through both Houses without a division.

Issues far graver than the settlement of merely domestic problems were now throwing their shadow across the course of Queen Victoria's Cabinet—issues that were to test, and in some instances to overtax, the loyalty of Aberdeen's colleagues, and to put to stringent proof the spirit of a generation that had never known a great war. "We have on our hands a sick man—a very sick man; it will be a great misfortune if, one of these days, he should slip away from us before the necessary arrangements have been made." These words, spoken

The Sick Man, 1853.

[1] In 1833 there were 43,000 convicts "doing time" in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.

on 9th January 1853 by Nicholas, the All-Russian Tzar,[1] to Sir George Hamilton Seymour, supplied a phrase which has become historic, and remained neatly descriptive of the condition of Turkey-in-Europe until beyond the close of the nineteenth century.[2] The Ottoman Empire in Europe had become a flagrant anachronism; not because it was a heritage of mediæval conquest—for to a like origin must be assigned almost every European state—but because the Turk maintained his position among modern nations by mediæval methods. In a time when nations were kept in subjection by the despotic authority of their rulers, the Turk had been a standing menace to all Europe, for he was as powerful as any Christian monarch; but he had long ceased to be a terror, except to the luckless races which remained in subjection to him. To the rising tide of Western civilisation he opposed the breastwork of philosophic indifference; although the ancient Saracen instinct for war still prompted him to adopt eagerly all modern developments of military armament. Inert and innocuous, except to its own subjects and dependencies, the Porte successfully defied the concert of Europe in virtue of genuine *vis inertiæ;* but the valid guarantee for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was to be found, not in her army and fleet, nor in the fervour of her Moslem population, but in the sleepless jealousy prevailing between the Great Powers as to the disposal of Ottoman territory. The heirs of "the sick man" actually dreaded his death because of the inevitable conflict that would follow among themselves.

Three of the Great Powers were more closely concerned than the rest in the Eastern question—Russia, by reason of her guardianship of the Eastern Church and her pressing need of seaboard for her fleet; Austria, on account of her claim to the Sultan's Danubian provinces; Great Britain, because she could not suffer the advance of Russia across the line of her communication with India. The continual expansion of Russia-in-Asia, and especially the steady

[1] The ceremonial title of the Emperor of Russia, which is usually, but incorrectly, rendered in English "Emperor of all the Russias."

[2] The triumph of the Young Turkish party and the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. took place while these lines (1909) were being penned, and afford some prospect of convalescence.

approach of the Russian frontier towards that of North-West India had so powerfully impressed British statesmen of all parties with the danger of a collision in that quarter, that they had made the integrity of the Ottoman Empire a cardinal principle in their foreign policy.

Project of the Emperor Nicholas, 1844–53.

Nicholas of Russia had convinced himself that the sick man was at last upon his death-bed, and that it was essential to the peace of Europe that his heirs should divide the inheritance before his demise. Accordingly he revived in 1853 the proposals which, when he visited England in 1844, he had caused Count Nesselrode to embody in a memorandum, to the effect that England, Austria, and Russia should act in concert and divide the Turkish dominion among themselves. Aberdeen was Foreign Secretary at that time; he had received the Tzar's proposals, caused them to be duly docketed and pigeon-holed at the Foreign Office, without expressing any dissent from the vast project which they enfolded. Aberdeen was now Prime Minister: was Nicholas to blame if he inferred some degree of acquiescence from his silence? The Tzar disclaimed all design for a Russian occupation of Constantinople; he proposed that Bulgaria and Servia should be constituted independent states under Russian protection, and that Egypt and Candia should form England's share of the plunder. All this, and much more, he explained to Sir Hamilton Seymour, assuring him that if Great Britain and Russia came to an understanding on the subject they need not take into account the views of the other Powers.

Readers will not suspect that the project received any encouragement from the British Government; but the Eastern aspect had become so threatening that Lord John Russell resigned the Foreign Office in February, alleging as a reason that the work was too heavy for the leader of the House of Commons.[1]

[1] Remaining a member of the Cabinet without office, he retained the leadership of the Commons, a precedent disapproved by the Queen (*Letters*, ii. 438) and constitutional authorities. His real motive in resigning may perhaps be read between the following lines: "Lord Aberdeen always told me that, after being Prime Minister for a short time, he meant to make way for me, and give up the post. But somehow the moment never came for executing his intentions" (*Recollections*, p. 272).

Lord Clarendon succeeded him as Foreign Minister; and at this juncture a fourth Power made itself felt in the Eastern controversy.

The dispute about the Holy Places, 1853.

Three hundred years had run since François Ier of France concluded a treaty with Solyman the Magnificent whereby the custody of the Holy Places in Palestine had been committed to the monks of the Latin Church, who were placed under protection of the Crown of France; but subsequent firmans had conferred upon the Greek Church certain rights infringing upon Latin privilege. Hence arose incessant wrangling upon a point such as might, indeed, have engrossed the attention of mediæval diplomatists, however trivial it might appear to nineteenth-century statesmen. Nevertheless, Louis Napoleon, being sore and angry with the Russian Court because of their delay in acknowledging his imperial rank and title,[1] plunged warmly into this archaic dispute, insisting that, "for the purpose of passing through the building into their grotto, the Latin monks should have the key of the main door of the church of Bethlehem and keys of the two doors of the Sacred Manger, and that they should be entitled to place in the Sanctuary of the Nativity a silver star adorned with the arms of France."

The arms of France! where were they? Defaced and obliterated, the lilies bloomed no longer on the palaces of her kings; but the heir of those kings was a living emperor who, finding it expedient to divert attention from the domestic affairs of his country, stood forward as champion of the Latin Church and threatened to occupy Jerusalem. Then appeared the Porte as arbiter between the rival monks, endeavouring by a new firman to make reasonable settlement between them. But reason stands no chance in an unreasonable quarrel. The Greek monks had another emperor as their champion. Before the issue of the firman,

[1] "The coldness and tardiness of the Northern Powers in recognising *our* new *bon frère* annoys him very much, and produces a bad effect in France. I don't think it wise. Unnecessary irritation may produce *real* mischief. To squabble about *how* to call him, after having praised and supported him after the *coup d'état*, seems to me very *kleinlich* and inconsistent." (Queen Victoria to King Leopold, 4th Jan. 1853).

Russian troops had been massing on the frontiers of Moldavia;[1] immediately after its issue Prince Menschikoff arrived in Constantinople with a large military staff, and endeavoured by threat of war to force the Porte to agree to a Russian protectorate of all Christians within Turkish dominions. Reschid Pasha asked for five or six days to consider such a momentous demand; but this reasonable request was refused, whereupon the Ottoman Council flatly declined the proposed convention. Off went Menschikoff in a cloud of displeasure; the Sick Man must receive the *coup de grâce.*

On 2nd July the Russian army, 60,000 strong, crossed the Pruth under Prince Gortchakoff (who had served in a better cause against the great Napoleon) and occupied Moldavia and Wallachia. An act of war, of course; but as no actual collision took place, representatives of Austria, France, Great Britain, and Prussia hurriedly assembled at Vienna, and, before the end of July, drew up a Note embodying terms for the peaceful settlement of the dispute, by which both Turkey and Russia intimated their readiness to abide. So far, so good; the world had shown that it was too old and wise to deluge a continent in blood for the settlement of a religious squabble. Nevertheless, it behoved the plenipotentiaries, above all things, to avoid ambiguity in the articles to which they sought the assent of the two hostile Powers. This precaution was precisely what they neglected. The Note, short as it was,[2] contained five passages so vague and ambiguous that they might be interpreted as giving away the whole case of Turkey, although nothing could have been further from the intention of the authors. Russia, perceiving her advantage, accepted the Note at once; but the Sultan's Council declined it, unless the five objectionable passages were modified. Nesselrode frankly explained why Russia could not agree to any modification,

The Russian army crosses the Pruth, 2nd July 1853.

[1] One of the Danubian principalities, united with Wallachia in 1859 and named Roumania. The suzerainty of Turkey was confirmed at the Paris conference 1858, but the independence of Roumania was declared by the treaties of San Stefano and Berlin in 1878.

[2] The text of the Vienna Note is printed in the *Annual Register*, 1853, p. 278.

which showed the British Cabinet, for the first time, that these passages had been interpreted by Russia in a sense directly contrary to that intended by the Four Powers.

England, therefore, was compelled to acquiesce in Turkey's refusal to sign the Note; public indignation against Russia becoming dangerously warm: mediation had failed. On 5th October the Porte formally declared war against Russia. On the 22nd the combined fleets of England and France, which had been lying for some weeks in Besika Bay, moved up the Dardanelles on the Sultan's invitation, for the protection of Constantinople.[1] Lord Aberdeen had written to the Queen on 7th October that "as there is very little chance of Russia undertaking any active hostilities . . . it may reasonably be hoped that no actual collision will take place."[2] Indeed the Prime Minister was in a very uncomfortable plight; fervently desiring peace himself, and convinced that it ought to be and might be secured by temperate dealing, he had Palmerston at his elbow and Stratford de Redcliffe at Constantinople, both breathing war. For Palmerston was giving trouble again, the experiment of bottling him in the Home Office having proved a failure. Aberdeen was torn between distaste for the course upon which Palmerston, supported by Russell, was dragging the Cabinet, and dread of offending his fiery colleague. "Your Majesty may perhaps be aware that there is no amount of flattery which is not offered to Lord Palmerston by the Tory party, in the hope of separating him altogether from the Government."[3] The Queen took alarm at the weakness of her Minister, who, as was evident, "was, against his better judgment, consenting to a course of policy which he inwardly condemned. . . . His desire to maintain unanimity at the Cabinet led to concessions which by degrees altered the whole character of the policy. . . . The Queen's position is a very painful one."[4]

Turkey declares war against Russia, 14th Oct. 1853.

With so nerveless a hand on the helm, the country was

[1] "We have undertaken to defend the territory of the Sultan from aggression, and that engagement must be fulfilled." (*Eastern Papers*, ii. 305).

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, ii. 453.

[3] Ibid., ii. 451.

[4] Memo. by Prince Albert, ibid., 454.

drifting towards war. The "actual collision," which Aberdeen assured the Queen was unlikely, took place before the end of the month. A Turkish squadron of twelve sail, anchored off Sinope, was attacked on 30th October and completely destroyed, with the loss of about 4000 officers and seamen; only about 400 escaped alive. News of this disaster, enacted almost under the guns of the allied fleet, created a terrible sensation in France and England, where it was asserted that the Turkish admiral had hauled down his flag before he was attacked, and that the Russians had disregarded the signal of surrender. This was not the case. Although the Turkish services had long been disorganised by neglect, and the pashas had become corrupt and enervate, the Paynim conquerors of old had transmitted enough of the ancient spirit to prevent men of their race ever refusing battle. It was a Turkish ship that fired the first shot in the action. The magnitude of the disaster caused it to be denounced by Western peoples as a massacre; but in truth it was a perfectly fair and highly successful act of war; the Russian Admiral Nachimoff's honour was no more impugned by the affair than was that of Admiral Codrington by the destruction of Mehemet Ali's fleet at Navarino.[1]

Destruction of the Turkish fleet, 30th Oct. 1853.

"Thank God! that's war," exclaimed Lord Stratford de Redcliffe[2] when he heard of the affair of Sinope, a sentiment which sounds little in keeping with the dignified reserve of a British Ambassador. But Lord Stratford had not been thirteen years Minister at the Porte without becoming convinced that it was merely a question of time when Russia should deliver an attack, which he knew that Turkey, single-handed, could not repel. Convinced, also, of the imperative necessity in the interests of Great Britain for keeping the Russian out of Constantinople, he rejoiced that the crash should come at a time when the Western Powers had rallied to Turkey

[1] See a remarkable letter (too long to quote) from Queen Victoria to Lord Clarendon, amending the draft of his despatch to Vienna (*Letters*, ii. 470).

[2] Nephew of George Canning, ambassador at Constantinople from 1841 to 1858. He died in 1880.

as they had never done before, and were never likely to do again.[1]

The four Powers were still striving to compose the strife. They drew up a protocol, to which Turkey gave, and Russia declined, consent. Aberdeen's task of holding together a discordant Cabinet was getting more hopeless than ever. Russell had now turned restive, impatient to step into his chief's shoes. He allied himself with Palmerston and the war party; but Palmerston cared for no such alliance. On the contrary, when Russell laid his Reform Bill before the Cabinet, Palmerston vowed he could be no party to such a measure. "I do not choose to be dragged through the dirt by John Russell!" was his phrase to Lansdowne the Mediator. Aberdeen, attempting to hold the two together, received a snappish retort from Russell—"Well, it will be very awkward for you if Palmerston quarrels with you one day about Reform, and I the next about Turkey!"[2] The team, as Greville had foreseen, was getting unmanageable. "The Queen must seriously call upon Lord Aberdeen and the Cabinet to consider whether they are justified in allowing such a state of things to continue!"[3] "Looking through our modern history," said Bulwer-Lytton in the House of Commons (January 1855), "I find that most of our powerful, even popular administrations have been coalitions. . . . But then there is one indispensable element of a coalition—*that its members should coalesce.* Now, sir, it is that element which seems to me to be wanting in the present Cabinet. It has been a union of party interests, but not a coalition of party sentiment and feeling."

Aberdeen continued to act as if the outward cohesion of his Cabinet were of greater moment than the peace of Europe. Convinced as he was that the internal condition

[1] "The perusal of Lord Stratford's despatches of the 5th inst. has given the Queen the strongest impression that, whilst guarding himself against the possibility of being called to account for acting in opposition to his instructions, he is pushing us deeper and deeper into the war policy which we wish to escape." (Queen Victoria to Lord Aberdeen, 26th November 1853. *Letters*, ii. 463.)

[2] Ibid., 467.

[3] Ibid., 463.

of the Ottoman Empire was past redemption, he ought to have taken his stand openly and declared that he would have no part as a Minister in supporting her in a war with Russia.[1] Such a course would have been approved by the Queen, and would have rallied to him all who desired peace. He would have been thrust from office at once, for war fever had smitten the people, and Palmerston was a personality more magnetic than Aberdeen; but it would have been to the profit of his own repute, and, which was of far greater moment, it would have enlightened the Tzar as to the feelings of the nation. So long as Aberdeen was Minister, Nicholas considered it impossible that England would interfere in arms between him and his prey. Of France he could not be so sure; but if the worst came about, why, there was no enemy he would prefer to this mushroom Emperor.

Palmerston resigned on 16th December, out of dislike, he said, to Russell's Reform Bill; but the belief was universal that he had been sacrificed to the peace party by "an influence behind the throne." The press, much of it at least, diligently spread the slander that Prince Albert was leagued with Aberdeen to betray the cause of Turkey. How loyal the Prince was to constitutional limitation, how temperate was the advice which, whether as consort or privy-councillor, he gave the Queen, is now clearly to be read in his published correspondence; but at the time he was dumb before his accusers, and the British public growled fiercely, reading, as it imagined, between the lines of the emphatic refutation of the slander offered by the leaders of both Houses when Parliament met in January. Palmerston, was the cry, is the only man to save the honour of England; and Palmerston, seeing that war had become the only issue, had withdrawn his resignation. Mobilisation, or what had to pass for mobilisation, of our slender land

[1] "Lord Aberdeen saw further than most of his contemporaries, and he did not commit the error of supposing Turkey could be reformed" (*History of Modern England*, by Herbert Paul, i. 321). Will the event prove that Aberdeen did not see quite far enough, and that the future is more hopeful for Turkey-in-Europe since the deposition of Abdul Hamid in 1909 than it could have been had it been incorporated in the Russian Empire fifty years ago?

forces was begun in January. Sir John Burgoyne, veteran Peninsular engineer, went out to plan defences for Constantinople; Lord Raglan, Wellington's trusted aide-de-camp in the old days, was appointed commander of the expedition. The first was seventy-two, the second sixty-six; let us hope that Napoleon spoke inconsiderately when he fixed forty as the term of a soldier's full capacity. On 12th March a treaty of alliance was signed between Great Britain, France, and Turkey; on the 28th formal declaration of war was issued against Russia.

War declared against Russia, 28th March 1854.

It requires an effort for one of the present generation to realise how far the nation had lapsed into unreadiness for war. It would have lapsed still further but for Prince Albert's incessant prompting to vigilance. It was owing to him that, in the summer of 1853, a temporary camp of exercise had been formed at Chobham, a striking novelty and excitement for holiday folk. Aldershot, as a place of arms, had no existence then; it has grown from the seed sown at Chobham. In the same year was assembled for the first time a permanent Channel Fleet, reviewed by the Queen at Spithead, and described with a glow of satisfaction by Prince Albert:—

"The finest fleet, perhaps, which England ever fitted out; forty ships of war of all kinds, all moved by steam but three. . . . The gigantic ships of war, among them the *Duke of Wellington* with 131 guns (a greater number than was ever assembled before in one vessel), went, without sails and propelled only by the screw, *eleven miles an hour*, and this against wind and tide! This is the greatest revolution in the conduct of naval warfare which has yet been known . . . and will render many fleets, like the present Russian one, useless. . . . We have already sixteen [line-of-battle ships fitted with screw] at sea and ten in an advanced state. France has no more than two, and the other Powers none. . . . I write all this, because last autumn we were bewailing our defenceless state, and because you know that, without wishing to be *mouche de coche*, I must rejoice to see that achieved which I had struggled so long and so hard to effect."

Great Britain, then, went to war with a fleet stronger than the combined fleets of any other three Powers; but her land forces, though perfectly disciplined and well

equipped, were few in numbers and with a reserve in a state of embryo, for the new Militia could not count for more as yet.

The Colonial and War Departments were under one Secretary of State, the Duke of Newcastle, a staunch Peelite. It is not surprising that, although full of energy and in the prime of life, he speedily found that it was far beyond the power of any single head to control both these departments. The colonies had become very different to the distant settlements which Pitt committed to Castlereagh's care in 1805; they had become wealthy dependencies—friendly states—and claimed thoughtful handling as such. For the first time in sixty years the Colonial and War Offices were put under separate Secretaries of State—an organic change, involving dislocation of staffs, embarrassing on the eve of a great war. Nay, the morning, rather; for this transfer of duties was not effected till July, several months after 25,000 troops had been despatched to the seat of war. Upon Newcastle, who took over the War Office, has been laid the chief blame for the subsequent breakdown; let it be remembered that he did not get a fair start.[1]

Varna, a fortified seaport of Bulgaria, was the appointed rendezvous of the British and French forces. Maréchal Saint-Arnaud commanded the French army, and the veteran Omar Pasha the Turkish contingent. The Russians had to learn that, however incapable the Sublime Porte might be of civil rule, its troops, when properly led, were splendid fighters. The Turkish garrison of Silistria, commanded by Captain Butler

Turkish successes, June–July 1854.

[1] "On accepting the Secretaryship for War, he found himself in this disadvantageous position: he had no separate office for his department, no document prescribing his new duties, no precedent for his guidance, and his under-secretaries were new to the work. . . . He was imperfectly acquainted with the best mode of exercising authority over the subordinate departments, and these departments were not officially informed of their relative position, or of their new duties towards the Minister for War. His interference was sought for in matters of detail, wherein his time should not have been occupied, and he was left unacquainted with transactions of which he should have received official cognisance." (*Report of the Sebastopol Committee.*)

of the Ceylon Rifles[1] and Lieutenant Nasmyth of the Indian army,[2] made good their defence for six weeks against Prince Gortschakoff, who raised the siege on 22nd June after losing, it is said, some 12,000 men. At Giurgevo, again, on 7th July, General Soimonoff[3] was badly beaten, and soon afterwards the whole of the Russian forces were withdrawn beyond the Pruth, and Turkish territory was free from invaders. This was in some measure due to the action of Austria, who, having ulterior views about this territory, had demanded the evacuation of the Principalities, backing her demand by a display of force on the frontier, and concluding a convention with the Porte on 14th June.

Forty years of peace had so completely effaced the realities of war and what it entailed from the understanding of Englishmen, that when Mr. Gladstone introduced his war budget on 6th March 1854, he proposed to meet the cost of the campaign out of revenue by the simple expedient of doubling the income-tax.

The original task set for the allied armies was the protection of Constantinople; but three months of inaction at Varna, during which the troops suffered severely from cholera, put too great a strain upon the public both in France and Great Britain. Their impatience for a victory was reflected in and stimulated by the press in both countries; Palmerston needed no goading; Aberdeen and Newcastle yielded to the cry. On 29th June a despatch was sent to Lord Raglan ordering him to attack Sebastopol, the great arsenal and harbour of Russia in the Crimea.

The departmental mind is as flexible as an elephant's trunk; it picks up a truss of hay with as much apparent ease as it does a hazel nut. This document, pregnant with the fate of nations in its main purport, concluded with impressing upon Raglan—the Fitzroy Somerset of a score of stricken fields—"the importance of selecting favourable weather" for disembarking! Sound exhortation, no doubt;

[1] Died of his wounds: the first British soldier killed in the war.
[2] Died at Pau in 1861.
[3] Afterwards killed at Inkerman.

more so than that conveyed in the same despatch, directing the Commander-in-Chief to seize and occupy the Isthmus of Perekop which connects the Crimea with the Russian mainland. Maps in the War Office showed how conveniently the waters of the Black Sea flowed around this isthmus, affording easy access for the fleet. What they did *not* show was that for several miles on each side of the isthmus the sea was only three or four feet deep! Neither did they show that the Russians had free access into the Crimea by a road and bridges along the east side of the Putrid Sea, quite independent of the Isthmus of Perekop.

Raglan undertook the enterprise with much the same misgiving as Moore expressed in setting out upon the campaign of Coruña:—

"It becomes my duty to acquaint you that it was more in deference to the views of the British Government as conveyed to me in your Grace's despatch, and to the known acquiescence of the Emperor Louis Napoleon in those views, than to any information in the possession of the naval and military authorities, either as to the extent of the enemy's force or their state of preparation, that the decision to make a descent upon the Crimea was adopted."

To the civilian Secretary of State and his colleagues accurate information about the enemy's strength and disposition seemed to be an unessential detail. Admiral Dundas, commanding the Black Sea fleet, shared Raglan's views about the invasion of the Crimea as impracticable, estimating the Russian force at 120,000. "Do not believe the Admiral's story," wrote Newcastle to Raglan, "about 120,000 men in the Crimea. I do not believe there are more than 30,000." The real figure turned out to be 76,000. Sir John Burgoyne had seen as much powder burnt as any man living; but, being a tried soldier, his opinion was not taken. "A desperate enterprise," he wrote about the invasion, "forced, I believe, on Lord Raglan and the French general by taunts from home. . . . Success or failure depends entirely on the force the enemy may have in the country, of which we have no information whatever."

On 21st September Newcastle telegraphed to the Queen that 25,000 British, 25,000 French, and 8000 Turkish troops had safely disembarked without opposition in Kalamita Bay, near the mouth of the Alma, about eight miles north of Sebastopol. On the day before that telegram was sent, the Allies encountered the Russian army under Prince Menschikoff, strongly entrenched on the heights of Alma. The Russian commander-in-chief had purposely refrained from resisting the disembarkation; he had chosen a position which he believed impregnable, intending to hold it till the arrival of reinforcements should enable him to issue from his entrenchments and annihilate the invaders with vastly superior numbers.

Battle of the Alma, 20th Sept. 1854.

But he had to deal with men who set at defiance all the established rules of tactics. Saint-Arnaud was desperately ill—mortally, as it turned out; there was little cohesion or concert between the British on the left and the French on the right of the attack. Only this was plain to the officers and men of both armies—there were the Russian batteries on the heights beyond a shallow river, heavy columns of infantry hanging like a grey cloud along the crests; the one thing was to get at them. Saint-Arnaud, addressing his generals of division, Canrobert and Prince Napoleon, said: "With such men as you, I have no orders to give; I have but to point to the enemy!"

There followed what Mr. Justin M'Carthy has aptly termed a "heroic scramble." At two o'clock the allies crossed the river under a tremendous artillery fire, and climbed the slopes beyond through a hail of musketry. Then the bayonets went to work; the great redoubt was carried by assault; at four o'clock the Russian line was broken, wavered, fell back, and the position was carried.

Against no power has the strength of England been so often pitted as against France. It was on the heights of Alma that, for the first time in history, the armies of the two nations stood shoulder to shoulder as allies in a pitched battle. Memorable, therefore, as an anniversary for both of them is the 20th September—a washing out of old scores, and the opening, let us believe, of a new and

long balancing of mutual good offices. But, in the meantime, where were the fruits of victory? The British had lost 2000 men in two hours' fighting, including 26 officers killed; the French returned their loss at 1200. Menschikoff was in full retreat, which vigorous pursuit must have turned into a rout. The opinion has been expressed that had this opportunity been taken, so greatly demoralised were the Russian troops by defeat, that the allies might have marched straight into Sebastopol.[1] This much seems certain, that the allies ought to have followed up their success; that Raglan earnestly desired to do so, but was hindered by Saint-Arnaud, who declined to move, being already in the shadow of death.[2]

Cautious as non-combatants should ever be (and often are *not*) in passing criticism on the operations of tried soldiers, it is impossible, even for a civilian, to overlook the desperate jeopardy to which the allied commanders now exposed their force, and the failure of Menschikoff to take advantage thereof.

After wasting two precious days on the battlefield, the allies resumed the advance, arriving on 24th September before the northern defences of Sebastopol. Here, if anywhere, had been the place for assault without the preliminaries of a siege;[3] but the Russian engineer, Colonel de Todleben, had been allowed two days to strengthen its defences, and had employed them well. Saint-Arnaud declined to take part in the assault projected for the 25th. Instead of this, it was decided to move round the town to the south side, an operation entailing a flank march of two days, in face of the whole Russian army. Had Menschikoff spent these days of grace in repairing the losses of his army, he must have become apprised of the enemy's

[1] "They might have entered Sebastopol unopposed" (Walpole's *England*, v. 108).

Kinglake and Todleben both considered that the place could have been taken by *coup de main*; but, on the other hand, Sir John Burgoyne, who was on Raglan's staff, and Sir E. Hamley held that an assault was out of the question.

[2] He died on 29th September.

[3] And rightly so, in the opinion of Burgoyne and Hamley, though Kinglake and Todleben thought otherwise.

movements and chosen his own time for destroying him. But, having been advised that Sebastopol could not repel an assault, he was as eager to get out of it as the allies were to get in. Whereupon took place one of the strangest manœuvres ever executed by opposing armies. While the allied columns were leaving the north of Sebastopol to get to the south, Menschikoff was leaving it on the south to get to the north. So neatly did the two segments of circles intersect that Raglan's scouts actually felt Menschikoff's rear-guard. The flank march was successfully accomplished, Raglan establishing his army with Balaklava as its base and depôt; and Canrobert, who succeeded to the French command on Saint-Arnaud's death, choosing Kamiesch Bay.

Nothing had been gained so far except a handful of laurels and the reflex effect of victory upon people at home. That, indeed, was so much to the good, because the summer's inaction at Varna, coupled with Napier's want of success in the Baltic,[1] had lashed the British public into such impatience as neither Aberdeen nor Newcastle had nerve to withstand.

A novel feature in this campaign was the presence at the front of war-correspondents of the leading journals. So long as fine weather lasted and matters went well with the army, this new and exciting kind of literature fanned popular enthusiasm to an extraordinary heat. Vivid description of the fine bearing of our men in the field and of their cordial comradeship with their ancient antagonists, the French, was all very well and useful; but as the winter drew near and the grave realities of the undertaking began to be apparent, the tone of the correspondence altered, departmental administration was held up to ridicule, and the capacity, even the courage, of the Commander-in-Chief and his staff were bitterly impugned. People had been taught to expect the immediate capture or capitulation of Sebastopol. Nobody had done more to encourage this expectation than Palmer-

[1] Admiral Sir Charles Napier, commanding a powerful expedition to the Baltic, captured and destroyed Bomarsund, but found the forts of Cronstadt and Sveaborg impregnable.

ston, who was perpetually spurring his colleagues to spirited action.[1]

On 30th September Newcastle announced to the Queen that Sebastopol had been taken by assault.[2] A week later he explained to her Majesty that "the weakness and desperation of the Russians were evinced by their sinking their ships at the mouth of the harbour."[3] No such easy interpretation was justified by anything in Raglan's despatches. "It is an injustice to the troops," he wrote on 18th October, "to view the accomplishment of the enterprise as an easy operation, and, with the full determination to do everything to ensure success, I must still regard it as one of extreme difficulty and of no great certainty."

Siege of Sebastopol, 24th Sept. 1854–8th Sept. 1855.

These and many other warnings from the same sure source were lightly brushed aside in the placid atmosphere of Pall Mall. Newcastle bade Raglan not to be afraid of bogeys, assuring him that "the Russians do not fight behind stone walls like the Turks. When the ultimate issue of the struggle appears to them evident, they surrender. . . . I will not believe that British arms can fail. . . . Her Majesty's Government entertain sanguine hopes that those difficulties which have presented themselves to your lordship's mind will long ere this have vanished, and lead us to indulge the fervent hope that Providence may be pleased to crown with success the great object of the expedition—the capture of the fortress of Sebastopol."

One may imagine the grim smile on war-worn Raglan's countenance as he perused these comfortable words. Vanished, say you! Inside those very substantial works lies tough Todleben, who has kept our fleet at safe distance by sinking seven battle-ships in the fair-way of the harbour; outside, our men are falling like autumn leaves, smitten with cholera, and the Crimean winter is at hand.

[1] "We and the French ought to go to the Crimea and take Sebastopol and the Russian fleet. . . . Sixty thousand English and French troops, with the fleet co-operating, would accomplish the object in six weeks after landing." (Palmerston to Newcastle, 16th July 1854.)

[2] Martineau's *Duke of Newcastle*, p. 160.

[3] Ibid., 161.

Providence, from whom Newcastle so confidently claimed succour, may be held to have interposed to prevent him from committing the blunder, at one time imminent, of changing horses when crossing a stream. The army was left in the hands to which it had been committed; but Newcastle, lending audience to irresponsible clamour, went outside his office in endeavouring to obtain the recall of Admiral Dundas, commanding the fleet in the Black Sea. Dundas had reiterated to incredulous Ministers the same warning as Raglan's, endeavouring to get them to realise the magnitude of the undertaking. When he reported that wooden ships were no match for stone forts, he was condemned as incompetent, or worse. "It is only a week ago," wrote Newcastle to Raglan on 9th October, "that I first heard of the fearful incapacity (to use no harsher word) of Admiral Dundas." He then proceeded to indite one of the most extraordinary despatches ever penned by a Secretary of State:—

"Unfortunately Sir James Graham [First Lord of the Admiralty] is at Balmoral. I am, of course, very unwilling to assume to myself any functions which do not belong to me, or to encroach upon the duties and province of the Admiralty. This, however, I wish you to understand, and in case of necessity you may impart it to Sir Edmund Lyons [second in command of the fleet]. If Admiral Dundas gives orders which unnecessarily imperil your army, and you can induce Sir Edmund Lyons to do so gallant an act as to disobey such orders, you and he shall have every support that I can give you."

Although Lord Aberdeen never saw this marvellous letter, both he and Graham were made aware of Newcastle's opinion about Dundas. Aberdeen wrote warmly protesting that it would be "most unjust" to recall him "on general accusations of incapacity." Dundas was a gallant and experienced sailor, but he was in his seventieth year, and had agreed with Raglan in disapproving of the expedition to the Crimea. The press led the cry for a younger and more dashing commander, and it is to the credit of Aberdeen and Graham that they lent no ear to the clamour. Meanwhile, before Newcastle's remarkable epistle could reach Raglan, Dundas had vindicated

himself against the charge of supineness by the bombardment of October 17, resolutely and skilfully conducted; but unsuccessful, owing to the superior weight of the Russian land batteries, and the long range at which the fire of the ships had to be given.

Brief, indeed, must be the notice of the principal events of the campaign, if space is to be had for comment upon the results of going to war without first counting the cost. There is ample record elsewhere of the military operations;[1] I propose to draw the reader's attention chiefly to the administrative side of the war. The bombardment of 17th October having proved ineffective, chiefly owing to Todleben's foresight in blocking the entrance to the harbour, the allies began siege operations in earnest. But they were not in strength to invest the place effectively; the garrison received constant reinforcements from the interior. Menschikoff, having repaired his losses and reorganised his army, threatened the allies on their rear; the besiegers themselves had to stand on the defensive.

On 25th October, a day to be marked in British annals with profound, but melancholy, pride, General Liprandi attacked the English camp at Balaklava with 20,000 to 30,000 men, and captured four redoubts held by the Turks on the Causeway Heights. Then took place a cavalry encounter which, though eclipsed in the popular mind by the subsequent exploit of the Light Brigade, was, in truth, not less heroic and far more effective. Two thousand Russian sabres suddenly appeared on the skyline above where General Scarlett held a small brigade, three hundred in all, of Scots Greys and Inniskillings. Scarlett, who had never been in action before, never hesitated. Out rang the trumpets for the charge, and away up the brae across the cumbered ground went the squadrons, to be engulfed in the dark mass of Russian cavalry. Outnumbered by seven to one, they could scarcely have extricated them-

Battle of Balaklava, 25th Oct. 1854.

[1] Among the chief works to be consulted are Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea; The War in the Crimea*, by Sir E. Hamley; *British Expedition to the Crimea*, by Sir W. H. Russell; *Letters from Headquarters*, by a Staff Officer; *Story of a Soldier's Life*, by Viscount Wolseley; *The Crimea Revisited*, by F.M. Sir Evelyn Wood.

selves, had they not been well supported. The Royals and 4th Dragoon Guards charged the right flank, the 5th Dragoon Guards the left flank, of the enemy, routing him thoroughly. It was an affair of five minutes, but all soldiers will give it prominence as an example of masterly handling of the mounted arm, deserving of remembrance. Had Lord Cardigan, commanding the Light Brigade, struck in, the Russian cavalry must have been destroyed. But Cardigan interpreted the orders he had received from his brother-in-law, Lord Lucan, commanding the cavalry, with whom he had long been at private feud, as binding him to the defence of a certain position; he shrank from the responsibility of quitting it, and flatly refused the urgent appeals made to him. Raglan, anxiously waiting for his infantry, which had missed the way, to enable him to recapture the Causeway Heights, sent a written order to Lucan to advance his cavalry and "to take advantage of any opportunity to recover the heights." For three-quarters of an hour Lucan did not move. Raglan, seeing the Russians preparing to remove the guns from the captured redoubts, sent another written order to Lucan bidding him "advance rapidly, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns." Now the Turkish guns were not visible from where Lucan sat; he began to dispute with Captain Nolan about the wisdom of such an order. "What guns, sir?" Nolan, a gallant but spluttering Irishman, lost his patience and pointed, as Lucan afterwards declared, "towards the left front of the valley," exclaiming contemptuously: "There my lord, is your enemy; there are your guns!"

Now at the end of the said valley were eight Russian guns, supported on either flank by batteries and riflemen. Lucan, indignant with Nolan's insubordinate speech, chose to interpret the order as directing him to take the Russian guns, instead of retaking the Turkish ones. He ordered Cardigan to advance the Light Brigade against the Russian batteries. They were not on speaking terms, these brothers-in-law, but Cardigan allowed himself a startled remonstrance before leading his beautiful brigade to certain destruction. Lucan insisted, whether out of wilful temper

or sheer stupidity no historian shall ever know, and the brigade went to its doom.

> "Courser's spirit, warrior's soul,
> Both of one metal made,
> Six hundred pieces of English gold,
> Such as Ural mines may never hold,
> Were they of the Light Brigade." [1]

Nolan, perceiving the awful mistake that had been made, rode furiously across the front of the brigade, pointing to the Causeway Heights; but he fell dead, struck by a piece of shell, before he could make himself understood.

The men who reached the end of that valley of death rode through the guns, scattered the gunners, and returned; but of six hundred and seventy-three horsemen who had followed the devoted Cardigan on a venture almost as futile as that of Sir Giles de Argentine at Bannockburn, only one hundred and ninety-five answered at roll-call. The French General Bosquet rendered all eulogy insipid, all criticism tame, by his epigrammatic comment—"C'était magnifique, mais ce n'était pas la guerre!"

"You have lost the Light Brigade!" was Raglan's bitter, but just, censure upon Lucan, who was afterwards removed from command of the cavalry. It has been his punishment to be remembered as the author of a needless and senseless sacrifice, and to be forgotten as having directed the splendid performance of the Heavy Brigade earlier in the day.

Five days before the battle of Balaklava, Raglan had informed the War Office that his army was reduced to 16,000, and that it was doubtful whether he could keep the field through the winter. England could send but scanty reinforcement. The French Emperor offered 20,000 troops if England would find transports. This was undertaken at once: huts, clothing, and other stores were packed off in abundance, but few of the cargoes reached their destination. Winter burst upon the Black Sea with unusual

Critical position of the allies, Oct. 1854.

[1] From a poem, privately printed, by Mr. E. H. Pember, K.C.

fury; the transports and cargo-ships were scattered. Two French war-ships and twenty-four British transports foundered in the hurricane of 13th November, with a loss of about one thousand lives and value reckoned at about two millions sterling.[1]

Meanwhile, before this succour, or what was left of it, could reach our troops, starving in summer clothing in the sloppy trenches, the Grand Dukes Michael and Nicholas, with the whole forces in Sebastopol, largely reinforced from the Danubian provinces, in all not less than 50,000 men, attacked the right of the British lines at dawn on 5th November.

Battle of Inkerman, 5th Nov. 1854.

Owing to a dense fog the surprise was nearly successful, but the darkness told even more against the assailing force than the defenders, and the attack was repulsed; but not until late in the afternoon, after a confused series of independent conflicts, constituting the bloodiest and most severely fought engagement of the whole campaign. The British loss was 2573 killed and wounded, including four generals and 141 other officers. The French, who timeously supported their allies, lost 1800, while the official Russian returns showed 11,959 killed, wounded, and prisoners.[2]

The carnage, unlike that of Balaklava, was not all in vain. The power of Russia was crippled for a time, and opportunity was afforded for supplying that succour which people in London and Paris had at last become convinced was imperatively needed.

The correspondence between the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Raglan during the autumn months of 1854 is most melancholy reading, so fatally incredulous was the Secretary of State about realities at the front. It was nearly midwinter before Newcastle could bring himself to accept as inevitable the prolongation of the siege until another year. Not until 3rd December did steamers sail with huts for the troops; not until the worst of that terrible winter was over did our army derive any advantage

[1] *Annual Register*, 1854, p. 352.

[2] Kinglake puts the British loss at 2487, the French at 929, and the Russian at 10,729. Raglan's estimate of the Russian loss was 20,000.

from them, and not until then was the deplorable breakdown of the hospital system remedied.[1]

Newcastle did all that mortal man could to get things on a better footing. He worked to the verge—Mr. Martineau says over the verge—of physical and mental breakdown; but he was powerless to repair the inherent defects of a system thus tersely epitomised afterwards by General Peel in the House of Commons: "I believe that the chief cause [of misfortune] was your commencement of a great war with little means." Nor must one blame the Duke overmuch because, broken in health and worn down by incessant strain, he proved unequal to defending his generals in the field against the savage attacks which, about Christmas time, the *Times* began to direct against Lord Raglan and his Staff.

The *Times* in those days had no rival in the English, still less in the Continental, press. It wielded an authority without precedent or present-day parallel in journalism. A single extract from a leader of 23rd December 1854 may serve as a fair sample of its long series of invective throughout that winter of sombre memories:—

"The noblest army England ever sent from these shores has been sacrificed to the grossest mismanagement. Incompetency, lethargy, aristocratic hauteur, official indifference, favour, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel, and riot in the camp before Sebastopol, in the harbour of Balaklava, in the hospitals of Scutari, and how much nearer home we do not venture to say. We say it with extreme reluctance, no one sees or hears anything of the Commander-in-Chief. Officers who landed on September 14th and who have been incessantly engaged at all the operations of the siege, are not even acquainted with the face of their commander."

Letters from officers with private grievances were published by sympathetic relatives, just in the old manner of which Wellington complained so bitterly during the Peninsular War. A stronger spirit than Newcastle bent

[1] All over Europe the winter was the most severe of any during the last sixty years. The cold of February 1895 exceeded that of February 1855, the mean temperature of that month in England being 29·1 in 1895 against 29·2 in 1855; but the early winter of 1894–95 was very mild, whereas 1854–55 was cold throughout.

to the storm. Palmerston listened to the persistent slanders.

"It is quite clear," he wrote on January 4, 1855, "that in many essential points Raglan is unequal to the task . . . but it is impossible to remove him. . . . But there are two incompetent men under him . . . and there cannot be the same difficulty in dealing with them. Airey and Estcourt, but especially the former, ought to be removed. . . . *Salus exercitus suprema lex*. . . . I will own to you that the sufferings of this fine and heroic army, mainly caused by the incapacity and apathy of its local chiefs, make me miserable when I think of it."

So deeply had gossips and grievance-mongers poisoned the intelligence of the strongest man in the Cabinet. After that there was constant recrimination. Newcastle wrote repeated censures to Raglan (to this day the War Office will not permit inspection of his despatches of January 6 and 22, 1855). Lord John Russell laid the blame on Newcastle, and resigned because Aberdeen would not remove him from the War Office and replace him with Palmerston. The distracted Cabinet met Parliament on January 23, and were speedily swept out of office by an adverse majority of 157 upon Roebuck's motion for a committee of inquiry into the conduct of the war.[1] In the confusion of this defeat, the most crushing inflicted upon any Government in the century, we part with the Newcastle régime. Well-meaning, industrious, intelligent, the Duke was excellently qualified to direct a great department in ordinary times; it was his misfortune to be called upon to conduct affairs through a crisis which nothing short of genius could encounter successfully. Not without true presage, significant for us of a later age, had he expressed his feelings upon assuming the head of the newly constituted War Office. "In leaving the Colonial Office," he wrote to a friend, "I am well aware what I have done. I know that in this new department, whatever success shall attend our army, I shall never derive any credit; and this, too, I well

Fall of the Coalition Government, Jan. 1855.

[1] "The Conservative party abstained, by order from their chiefs, from giving the cheer of triumph which usually issues from a majority after a vote upon an important occasion" (*Lord Palmerston to the Queen*, 30th Jan. 1855).

know, that if there shall be disaster, upon me alone will come the blame and the public indignation."

After the failure of repeated attempts to replace the fallen Government, nearly all the old Ministers resumed office, with Palmerston as Prime Minister instead of Aberdeen, and Lord Panmure in Newcastle's place at the War Office, a post for which it may well be imagined there was no very keen competition. Although past the prime of life and in impaired health, he brought to the task vigorous common sense, business-like method, and capacity for work. Nevertheless, we find him at the very outset accepting as "from sources of truth which cannot be impeached" all the groundless stories of mismanagement and neglect on the part of Raglan and his staff. On February 12 he sent to Raglan an official despatch and a private letter. It is difficult to reconcile the tenour of one with that of the other. The private letter was cordial and sympathetic in tone:—

Lord Palmerston's First Administration, Feb. 1855–Feb. 1858.

"You have done us great service; nobody could have done better in keeping up friendly relations with our allies, and the quiet way in which you have effected your relief in the trenches, though not to the extent you could desire, is most gratifying to the Government and myself. I don't want to place my views too much or too conspicuously before you, but it occurs to me that we ought to know your opinion upon every point of strategical detail without loss of time."

Four such points are specified, the last of which, and Raglan's reply, remind one of similar question and answer passing between Lord Liverpool and Wellington in October 1809—If you have to withdraw the army, how is it to be done? "No thought of withdrawing has as yet been entertained," was Raglan's prompt response. Read only the private letter and the reply thereto, and perfect confidence in each other seems to prevail between the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief. But turn to the official correspondence, and how lamentable do the relations between them appear. Panmure's despatch was one long complaint and censure. Raglan has not kept the Government informed of the progress of events; he has neglected his communication with the Balaklava base; he has allowed

his troops to suffer unnecessarily from cold and disease; "your visits to the camp are few and far between," and the tents are wet and filthy, &c., &c. He concluded by strongly condemning Quartermaster-General Airey and Adjutant-General Estcourt, stating that he was about to send out Sir James Simpson as Second in Command of the Army, and appoint Sir George Brown Chief of the Staff. Compare with this despatch, unrelieved as it is by a single sentence of approval, a memorandum upon the state of the Army and War Department which Panmure laid before the Cabinet at the very time when he was thus imputing blame to Raglan and his Staff:—

"The regimental system is as nearly perfect as it can be. The system by which an army should be provisioned, moved, brought to act in the field and the trenches, taught to attack or defend, is non-existent. . . . We have no means of making general-officers or of forming an efficient staff."

Raglan's reply to the despatch of February 12 is long and temperate, dealing with every point in detail, and especially defending Airey from the groundless charges made against him. But in the concluding paragraph the old soldier allows himself some warmth of rejoinder:—

"My lord, I have passed a life of honour. I have served the Crown for above fifty years. . . . I have served under the greatest man of the age more than half my life, have enjoyed his confidence, and have, I am proud to say, been ever regarded by him as a man of some truth and some judgment as to the qualifications of officers; and yet having been placed in the most difficult position in which an officer was ever called upon to serve, and having successfully carried out most difficult operations . . . I am charged with every species of neglect, and the opinion which it was my solemn duty to give of the merits of officers, and the assertions I have made in support of it, are set at naught, and your lordship is satisfied that your irresponsible informants are more worthy of credit than I am."

Great is the temptation to quote from these letters at even greater length than I have done; for without doing so it is almost impossible to give a right impression of Raglan's extraordinary patience and amiability. An officer less loyal and devoted would have sought relief from a position which

slander and distrust had made well-nigh intolerable, and would have thrown up a command for which his political chief had plainly declared he was unfit. But Raglan had not served under Wellington without imbibing the spirit of duty in a degree denied to most men. Having made his protest, he uttered no more complaints, and Panmure, who had written with the poison of gout in his veins, was relieved by a bout of it which, though it deprived him of the use of both hands for two months, restored his temper and cleared his judgment. Henceforward perfect harmony prevailed between the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief. Panmure had difficulties with his colleagues in defending Raglan. All through those spring months the public continued to rage and the press to insist upon a victim. It is disheartening, as it is surprising, to find Palmerston himself carried away by the clamour.

"I for one," he wrote to Panmure on May 1, "cannot undertake to stand up in my place in Parliament and defend an inactivity which would leave our army to be, in the ensuing campaign, the victim of that knot of incapables who, in the last eight months, have been the direct cause of the disability and death of thousands of our brave men."

But by this time the scales had fallen from Panmure's eyes. He had sent out General Simpson to curse, and lo! he had nothing but blessing for the men at the front, cruelly traduced as they had been:—

"The result of my observations since coming here is that we are in *a regular fix!* It is impossible, my lord, that any military man of experience could have recommended the descent of this army in the Crimea, and *whoever* has ordered this expedition has much to answer for. . . . Lord Raglan is in perfect health and spirits, and how he goes through all he does is wonderful. I consider him the worst used man I ever heard of! . . . It is grievous to see, in the midst of the very serious operations at present demanding constant attention [the eighteen days' bombardment of April 1855 was in progress], a huge bag of letters, *twice* a week per mail, laid on his table, demanding the utmost care in their perusal, quite sufficient to occupy *entirely* the mind of any man who has nothing else to think of. . . . The state of our camps is another subject for misrepresentation at home. I know them all pretty well now, and more cleanly encampments I never saw. . . . There is not a Staff officer in the Army with whom I have not had

intercourse, in order to see and judge what sort of men they are. . . . There is not one of these incompetent; on the contrary, they are nearly all of them men of good attainments and good officers. I am confident in the correctness of my opinion, and it is but just to these officers that I should declare it, *for I came among them with considerable prejudice against them.* They seem to vie with each other in showing their merit and anxiety for the good of the Service, and I must say I never served with an army where a higher feeling and sense of duty existed than I remark in the General and Staff officers of this Army. It pervades all ranks, except amongst the low and grovelling correspondents of the *Times*, of whom there are always some in every army."

Death of the Emperor Nicholas, 2nd March 1855.

On 2nd March the Tzar Nicholas died. Peace negotiations were opened immediately at Vienna, and the new Tzar, Alexander II., sent a representative to the conference, "in a sincere spirit of concord." Lord John Russell was there for Great Britain, M. Drouyn de Lhuys for France, but the proceedings broke down through the refusal of Russia to consent to the Black Sea being neutralised. The war went on, the allies receiving such accession of strength as could be afforded by the little kingdom of Sardinia, whose high-spirited monarch Victor Emanuel cherished designs on the throne of united Italy, and, with ulterior useful combinations in view, plunged his people into a quarrel in which he had no more concern than the Queen of the Sandwich Islands. Four hundred great guns battered away at Todleben's defences without much result, and on 18th June the allies were repulsed with heavy loss in a combined assault on the Malakoff and Redan forts.

Florence Nightingale, 1854–55.

No notice, however succinct, of this campaign would be faithful without mention of a certain Englishwoman's devotion. The state of the hospitals at Scutari was heart-rending. Pity and indignation were kindled by letters in the press from eyewitnesses, and £25,000 was speedily collected in London to furnish the needful appliances, and many Englishwomen enrolled themselves as nurses under the lead of Miss Florence Nightingale. No commander so puissant—no statesman so powerful—that his name shall outlast that of this young lady, whose services, in spite of official objection

to an undertaking without precedent, were at last accepted by Sidney Herbert, the Secretary at War.[1] Miss Nightingale arrived at Scutari with thirty-seven nurses on 5th November; Miss Stanley, sister of the Dean of Westminster, followed shortly after with forty more. To Florence Nightingale is due the gratitude of every combatant, present and to come, for the system she founded has far outlasted the Crimean campaign. No army now moves on active service without its train of skilled nurses, and the Geneva Convention was the outcome of this first mission of mercy.

As the season advanced the physical suffering in the trenches was greatly lessened, but the military outlook went from bad to worse, owing to the friction inseparable from dual command, the steady reinforcement of the Russian garrison, and Todleben's tireless industry in creating new defences. Impatience and misgiving were rising again at home. On 24th June the Queen wrote bitterly complaining of "this incomprehensible silence of Lord Raglan's. . . Would not Lord Panmure telegraph to Lord Raglan to ask what it means, and to tell him that nothing but these two telegraphs of yesterday (the one really quite absurd at such a moment) have reached us, and that we *must* have a few words to say what is going on."

Do your Queen's bidding, my lord; the wires will serve to make the inquiry, but it will scarcely reach the Queen's brave servant before he has passed into that silence which is indeed "incomprehensible." Lord Raglan died on June 28, ten days after the disastrous repulse of his troops from the Redan. His reputation as a commander has been amply redeemed from the shadows which a Ministry inexperienced in war allowed to gather round it. It was his lot to be called away before his last task was accomplished and before his countrymen were aware what they lost in him; but we know now that never did Englishman more nobly earn the verdict—*Fuit sine labe decus.*

Death of Lord Raglan, 28th June 1855.

Upon General Simpson devolved the command of the army, but at first he felt quite unequal to the task.

[1] A Minister subordinate to the Secretary of State for War.

"I feel it very irksome and embarrassing to have to do with these Allies! No man can equal our lamented Chief in that respect. I sincerely trust, my lord, that a General of distinction will be sent immediately to command this army. . . . I hope soon to be relieved from work that is too much for me. . . . I have been ill this last week with gout in my feet and ankle. . . . The correspondence here is enough to break down any man. I labour at it from four in the morning till six in the evening, and every mail seems to bring an increase of it. My outdoor military duties are much neglected, and I feel that my work is unsatisfactory, because not properly done. Every one around me is sick more or less."

From a later letter, July 17, one may gather that people at home had failed, even at this late period, to realise the extent and nature of the work devolving on the Commander-in-Chief:—

. . . "I think, my lord, that some telegraphic messages reach us that cannot be sent under due authority, and are perhaps unknown to you. . . . For instance, I was called up last night, a dragoon having come express from St. George's Monastery with a telegraphic message in these words: 'Lord Panmure to General Simpson—Captain Jervis has been bitten by a centipede. How is he now?' This seems rather too trifling an affair to call for a dragoon to ride a couple of miles in the dark, that he may knock up the Commander of the Army out of the very small allowance of sleep permitted to him! Then, upon sending in the morning another mounted dragoon to inquire after Captain Jervis, four miles off, it is found that he never has been bitten at all, but has had a boil, from which he is fast recovering."

Panmure's reply to this is somewhat surprising. Can civilians never be got to realise what the command of a field force entails upon brain and body?

"No telegraphic messages reach you which I do not sanction. The inquiry after Captain Jervis was made at the earnest request of his father, the Chief Justice."

Simpson was continued in the command; but a dormant commission was made out in favour of Sir William Codrington, lest Simpson should break down. But Simpson's health improved, and his administration, while it lasted, was vigorous and successful. On September 8 the French successfully stormed and held the Malakoff; and although

the simultaneous British attack on the Redan failed, it fully served its purpose as a distraction for the French. That night the Russians evacuated the south side of Sebastopol, blowing up their magazines, and the siege of 339 days was brought to a victorious end.

Fall of Sebastopol, 8th Sept. 1855.

There was much rejoicing at home, of course; but presently the old impatience was rekindled. Simpson was told plainly that he must not remain inactive; the Russians must be driven clean out of the Crimea. So peremptory and unfeeling were the terms of Panmure's telegram making this demand—so little were the Cabinet able to realise the strategic position, and so poor was the measure of confidence they reposed in their Commander-in-Chief—that Simpson was goaded into telegraphing his resignation on September 28.

"It is plain to me," he wrote on the 29th, "that in England a very erroneous notion exists on matters here in general. The Press seems to guide every one at home. Were we to act as you seem to expect in attacking the Russians in perhaps the strongest entrenched position that ever was seen, the odds are that the Allied Armies would be beaten. . . . It is unfortunate for commanders when they lose the confidence of their Government."

Simpson retained his command till November 10, when he handed it over to Codrington, hostilities, with the exception of a few affairs of outposts, being at an end. But it was not until February 25, 1856, that the Plenipotentiaries met in Paris to treat about peace, and neither the British nor the French governments relaxed preparations for a fresh campaign. An armistice was signed on March 15, but on July 12 the last of the British troops embarked and the evacuation of the Crimea was complete.

Instead of attempting in this sketch to follow the movements of armies or to describe the vicissitudes of siege and individual acts of heroism, I have thought it of better profit to dwell upon the deplorable confusion and unreadiness which prevailed in England when war was declared, and indeed until the campaign was half through. Nor was that all. Military opinion upon points

of strategy was constantly overruled and set at naught by Ministers whose dominant motive it was to keep the public and the press in tolerable good humour, even to the point of sacrificing the careers and reputations of the men whom, having appointed to the work, it was their duty to support morally and materially.

Lord Raglan was the first British general who had to conduct a campaign advised, controlled, directed, and censured by telegraph. The difficulty of his task was aggravated by having to act in concert with an ally of splendid military quality, no doubt, but jealous and sensitive. It was inevitable that there should be difference of opinion upon critical occasions, requiring the utmost tact and delicacy of handling from the British Commander-in-Chief. It is no exaggeration to declare that, so far from being strengthened by the assured confidence of Ministers and the public, Raglan and his successor Simpson were continually harassed by the angry impatience of Parliament and the press, both of which attacked them violently as dilatory blunderers. Most deserving of careful study are the annals of this war by all present and future aspirants to a place in the legislature, not to say the government, of this country; for it is through the House of Commons that the pressure comes, driving Ministers into courses about which it is humiliating to read.

The operations of war have been greatly modified in the course of half a century, but the lessons of the Crimean campaign are as cogent as ever. Should we, unhappily, be again involved in a great war, the most priceless service that men of leading can do for their country will be to allay the public impatience for great victories. Periods of apparent inactivity in the field sometimes conduce more to bringing war to a close than a brilliant series of feats of arms.

"It is extremely difficult," wrote Sir Edward Hamley in his *Operations of War*, "to persuade even intelligent auditors that two armies are not like two fencers in an arena, who may shift their ground to all points of the compass; but rather resemble two swordsmen on a narrow plank which overhangs an abyss, where each has to think, not only of giving and parrying thrusts, but of

keeping his footing under penalty of destruction. The most unpractised general feels this at once on taking a command in a district where his troops are no longer supported by routine; or, if he does not, *the loss of a single meal to his army* would sufficiently impress it on him. While distant spectators imagine him to be intent only on striking or parrying a blow, he probably directs a hundred glances—a hundred anxious thoughts—to the communications in his rear, for one that he bestows on his adversaries' front."

CHAPTER XIII

Cabinet crisis—Lord Palmerston's First Administration—Treaty of Paris—War with China—Defeat of the Government—Dissolution of Parliament—Lord Elgin's mission to China—Bombardment of Canton—Naval disaster in the Pei-ho—Destruction of the Summer Palace, Pekin—Treaty of Tientsin ratified—Outbreak of the Indian Mutiny—Loyalty of the Sikhs—Charles, Earl Canning—Vigorous precaution at Lahore—Massacres at Cawnpur—Death of the Commander-in-Chief—John Nicholson—Capture of Delhi—Death of Nicholson—Sir Colin Campbell appointed Commander-in-Chief—Siege of Lucknow—First relief of Lucknow—Second relief of Lucknow—Death of Sir Henry Havelock—Capture of Lucknow—Loyalty of Scindia and Holkar—Reform of Indian Government.

HARKING back to the beginning of the year, when a crisis of unusual intensity was caused by the collapse of the Aberdeen coalition on 30th January 1855, we find the Sovereign in much difficulty to find anybody to carry on the government; this, too, in the middle of a great war. Lord John Russell,[1] indeed, was ready enough to undertake it, but nobody trusted one who had just deserted his chief on the eve of a vote of censure. Neither Clarendon, Gladstone, Sir George Grey, nor Sir James Graham would take office under so shifty a leader. Lord Lansdowne pled advanced age as his excuse; the country cried out for "Old Pam." Surely the Queen would never be compelled to employ as her First Minister the man who had so often and so deeply compromised her government in the past! She sent for Lord Derby, who

Cabinet crisis, 1855.

[1] Russell has a curious paragraph in his *Recollections* (p. 270): "I committed an error in resigning my office under Lord Aberdeen at the time and in the manner in which I did it. But I had, in fact, committed a much greater error in consenting to serve under Lord Aberdeen as Prime Minister. I had served under Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne before I became Prime Minister, and I served under Lord Palmerston after I had been Prime Minister. In no one of these cases did I find any difficulty in allying subordination with due counsel and co-operation. But, as it is proverbially said, 'Where there is a will there is a way,' so in political affairs the converse is true, 'Where there is no will there is no way.'" The plain meaning of this is that Russell had "no will" to be a loyal colleague to Aberdeen.

did his best to carry out her Majesty's wishes, but failed, because the Conservative party were not strong enough numerically to stand by themselves, and neither Whigs nor Peelites would join one so deeply dyed with Protection as he was.

"He (Lord Derby) knew that the whole country cried out for Lord Palmerston as the only man fit for carrying on the war with success, and he owned the necessity of having him in the Government . . . but he must say, speaking without reserve, that whatever the ignorant public might think, Lord Palmerston was totally unfit for the task. He had become very deaf as well as very blind, was seventy-one years old, and . . . in fact, though he still kept up his sprightly manners of youth, it was evident that his day had gone by."[1]

Never was there a more faulty diagnosis. The nation recognised in Palmerston the qualities of a leader: compared with these, all past misdemeanours dwindled into mere breaches of etiquette. Derby, perhaps, was not his inferior in these qualities, but then Derby wished to lead whither the nation would not follow. As for Palmerston's physical fitness, time was to prove him capable of adding ten vigorous years to his half-century of public service. Clearly Palmerston was the man of the moment; and on 4th February the Queen laid her commands upon him.

At first it seemed as if he, too, were doomed to fail, so deeply did some of the late Cabinet resent the treatment of Lord Aberdeen. It was Aberdeen himself who, with singular magnanimity, relieved his Queen and country from a state of matters not only embarrassing but dangerous. He wrote to Sidney Herbert in a spirit of manly self-abnegation, too seldom manifested in public affairs, urging him and those who acted with him to lay aside all private feelings and to consider only the national necessity.[2] Aberdeen's influence with his former colleagues was derived from his great experience of affairs, combined with a thoroughly lovable

Lord Aberdeen's magnanimity, Feb. 1855.

[1] Queen Victoria's memorandum of an interview with Lord Derby, 31st Jan. 1855 (*Letters*, iii. 81).

[2] This noble letter must be perused before Lord Aberdeen's true character can be understood. It is printed in *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 99.

nature; it prevailed to overcome their objections, and on 7th February Palmerston was able to submit to the Queen a complete list of the Cabinet.[1] But scarcely had Ministers settled into their places, when the crisis was renewed. The late Ministry had fallen over Roebuck's motion for a committee of inquiry into the conduct of the war; Roebuck now fixed 22nd February for naming the committee; Palmerston, though strongly opposed to appointing such a committee, felt powerless to resist it, so overwhelming was the majority of the Commons pledged to it, and so strong the public indignation regarding the suffering to which the troops had been exposed. Rather than consent to a course which they considered "most unconstitutional, most presumptuous, and most dangerous,"[2] the Peelite Ministers—Gladstone, Herbert, and Graham—resigned on 21st February, and were replaced by Russell at the Colonial Office, Sir George Lewis at the Treasury, and Sir Charles Wood at the Admiralty.

We may now resume the narrative which has been interrupted by this retrospect.

Sebastopol had fallen, but not into the hands of the allies; it had been erased from the face of the earth. The most important article in the treaty of peace, signed by the plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers at the Congress of Paris on 30th March, was that which guaranteed the neutrality of the Black Sea. Russia received back the ruins of Sebastopol in exchange for the wreck of Kars,[3] and the Eastern question was laid to rest—for a season.

Treaty of Paris, 30th March 1856.

The price of victory to England was the lives of four-and-twenty thousands of her sons and an addition of forty-one millions to her debt—what could she reckon as her

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 103.

[2] Gladstone's expressions to Prince Albert. Ibid., iii. 108.

[3] Kars, a fortified town of Armenia, had been closely besieged since early in June. A splendid defence was maintained by the Turkish garrison under General Williams and other British officers, and it was not until the defenders had suffered frightfully from cholera and starvation, and all hope of relief had been abandoned, that the place surrendered on 28th November. The Russians had lost many thousands of men in the siege, but General Mouravieff warmly congratulated Williams on the gallantry of the defence, and allowed the garrison to march out with the honours of war.

gain? Nothing, in truth, save the indirect advantage of having thrust Russia back from the high road to India, and the direct benefit of being roused to the conviction that the sword which has carved out a great empire must never be allowed to rust in the scabbard. Be the policy of Great Britain as pacific as it may, henceforward she must never be found unready for war. Against this somewhat negative advantage must be set the measure in which the maritime power of Great Britain was impaired by the Declaration of Paris, issued simultaneously with the promulgation of the treaty, whereby the plenipotentiaries, at the instance of Count Walewski, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, bound their respective governments in future to abstain from privateering, to surrender the right of search, and to allow a neutral flag to cover an enemy's goods, other than contraband of war. Lord Derby, supporting Lord Colchester's motion disapproving these terms, spoke of the Declaration as "the Clarendon capitulation"; but not even he could induce the House of Lords to believe that Palmerston had agreed to sacrifice any material advantage, and the motion was rejected by a majority of fifty-four. Nevertheless, the sacrifice was a substantial one; permanently increasing the burden laid upon British taxpayers for maintaining command of the sea.

It is well that the next chapter in British warfare is a short one, for it is one that Britons can feel little pride in perusing. Its preface consists of a paragraph in the Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament on 3rd February 1857: "Acts of violence, insults to the British flag, and infraction of treaty rights, committed by the local Chinese authorities at Canton, and a pertinacious refusal of redress, have rendered it necessary for her Majesty's officers in China to have recourse to measures of force to obtain satisfaction." War with China, 1856.

The trouble arose from the action of certain Chinese officials, who boarded the *Arrow*, a vessel of the kind termed "lorcha," lying off Canton, manned by Chinese but commanded by a British subject, and flying the British flag. Twelve of her crew were seized, pinioned and taken on board a war-junk, in the belief, probably well founded, that

at least one of them was a notorious pirate. Mr. Parkes,[1] British Consul at Canton, promptly demanded the release of these men, and an apology for the insult to the flag. The men were released after some delay, but Governor Yeh flatly refused to apologise, declaring that the *Arrow* was not a British vessel, but a piratical craft. It was ascertained that she had been duly registered and licensed as a British vessel, but that her registration had actually expired ten days before the arrest of the crew, the master, Kennedy, being absent from his ship at the time. Parkes appealed to Sir John Bowring, British Minister at Hong-kong, who informed him that whereas the owners of the *Arrow* had neglected to renew her registration, the British flag had been unwarrantably displayed; but that the Chinese authorities could not have been aware of the lapse, and therefore Commissioner Yeh must make formal apology within forty-eight hours. In vain did Yeh most reasonably insist that a vessel owned and manned by Chinese could not be made British by merely hoisting a flag. A man of Bowring's temperament could not be brought to own himself in the wrong; moreover, he perceived in this miserable dispute an opportunity of enforcing an article of the treaty of 1842 which provided for the admission of the British merchants to Canton, and which had never been carried into effect; he therefore deliberately lied to Commissioner Yeh, informing him that "whatever representations may have been made to your Excellency, there is no doubt that the lorcha *Arrow* lawfully bore the British flag under a register granted by me." This after he had admitted to Parkes that the lorcha's licence had lapsed!

It were bad enough had Bowring stopped after thus smirching the honour of his office; but he went from bad to worse, and landed his country in an unjust war. Incredible as it may seem that the power to do so should have been vested in a single official, and still more so that a British Minister should exert that power in such a wretched squabble, Bowring desired Sir Michael Seymour, admiral on the Chinese station, to destroy the forts of

[1] Afterwards Sir Harry Parkes, appointed British Minister to China in 1883.

Canton. Seymour complied by shelling the forts and public buildings and burning a great part of the suburbs. Yeh now put himself in the wrong by retaliating with a proclamation, offering a reward for the heads of Englishmen; but Yeh's wrong was far less discreditable than the outrage inflicted in the Queen's name upon a friendly nation, and that was the view taken by Parliament when the papers were laid before it. It is true that the House of Lords, by 146 votes to 110, rejected Lord Derby's motion censuring the Government: not so the House of Commons, where Cobden moved a vote of censure on 26th February. Here was Palmerston's opportunity for another *civis Romanus* flourish, which he reserved till 3rd March, the last night of the debate; but it sounded hollow and insincere after Cobden's grave indictment, vigorously supported by Russell and Gladstone. The Liberal Ministry paid for their defence of Sir John Bowring by being left in a minority of sixteen, thirty-five of their own party voting with Cobden, and twenty-one Conservatives with the Government.

Defeat of the Government, 3rd March 1857.

In the course of the debate Disraeli had dared "the proud leaders of the Liberal party" to go to the country with the cry: "No reform! new taxes; Canton blazing; Peking invaded!" Palmerston accepted the challenge; he advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament, which was done accordingly in March. Having a thoroughly bad case, Palmerston adopted in his election address the time-honoured device of abusing his opponent's attorney. "An insolent barbarian"—such was his description of the stout-hearted Yeh—"an insolent barbarian, wielding authority at Canton, violated the British flag, broke the engagements of treaties, offered rewards for the heads of British subjects in that part of China, and planned their destruction by murder, assassination, and poison." In a dispute between white men and yellow men the average British elector was not so fastidious as to object to the term "barbarian" being applied to a race which possessed literature and civilisation long before England had become a nation. The constituencies gave Palmerston a triumph not to be measured only by the

Dissolution of Parliament, March 1857.

handsome increase in his parliamentary majority, but to be reckoned a personal tribute to himself; for, with all his faults, "Old Pam" was a typical Englishman; his indiscretions were those of the perennial youth with which he appeared endowed; and if his foreign policy savoured of that which in after years came to be known as "jingoism," it was to his vigour that the public attributed the redemption of the Crimean expedition from disaster. Emphasis was given to this feeling by the utter overthrow of the peace party, and the defeat of their leaders at the polls. Gladstone and Russell, indeed, retained their seats respectively for Oxford University and the City of London; but among the Liberals who fell were Richard Cobden, John Bright, Milner Gibson, and Henry Layard, and the Peelite Cardwell paid similar forfeit for having joined them in denouncing an unjust war.

Strengthened by this decisive mandate, Palmerston proceeded to take vigorous measures with the Chinese. Lord Elgin was sent out to settle the dispute, supported, as was announced in the Queen's speech, by "an adequate naval and military force." Sir Michael Seymour had been busy meanwhile, burning houses and other property and blowing up an immense number of war-junks; but when Elgin arrived at Point de Galle he received news from India that dwarfed the Chinese scuffle into insignificance. Urgent letters reached him at Singapore on 3rd June from the Governor-General of India, announcing the outbreak of a formidable mutiny among the Company's native troops, and begging him to send what reinforcements he could spare. Had Elgin wavered or shrunk from responsibility, it is probable that British rule in India could not have been maintained. He sent forward H.M.S. *Shannon* to Calcutta with the troops intended for Canton, proceeding himself to Hong-kong, only to return to India with the force he could collect in that city. It was these reinforcements, slender though they were, and the arrival of 6000 troops under Sir James Outram from Persia, that just enabled the Indian Government to hold their own through the most tremendous crisis in its history.

Lord Elgin's mission to China, 1857.

His prompt action saves India.

Thus was the settlement of the Chinese imbroglio held over for some months; but we may by anticipation follow to their inglorious close those events which had their rise in what Elgin privately described to his wife as "that wretched question of the *Arrow*, which is a scandal to us, and is so considered, I have reason to know, by all except the few who are personally compromised."[1]

Fresh troops having been sent out from England to Hong-kong, Elgin returned thither in autumn, and on 12th December delivered an ultimatum to Commissioner Yeh, hardly referring at all to the *Arrow* business, but insisting on trading facilities provided for by the treaty of 1842. Unhappily, Yeh could not put aside the wrongs inflicted upon his country. He made evasive reply, and Elgin was compelled, greatly against his inclination, to enforce his demand by a fresh bombardment. On 5th January 1858 Canton was occupied by an allied force of British and French.[2] The unfortunate Yeh, disowned and degraded from office by his own Emperor, was sent as a prisoner to Calcutta, where he did not long survive the invasion of his beloved Canton by "foreign devils." On 26th June was signed the treaty of Tientsin, providing for the mutual appointment of ambassadors at the respective courts of St. James's and Peking, and the free admission of British travellers and traders to all parts of the interior of China. But whereas nothing is more repugnant to Oriental statecraft than finality, there was to be more bloody work before this treaty could be ratified. The Taku forts at the mouth of the Pei-ho river had been captured by the British and French expedition in 1858, and restored to the Chinese when the treaty was signed. But when Sir Frederick Bruce was appointed ambassador to the Court of Peking, and attempted to proceed thither in July 1859 to get the treaty ratified, Admiral Hope, commanding a flotilla of gunboats, escorting

Bombardment of Canton, Jan. 1858.

[1] Lord Elgin's *Letters and Journals*, p. 207.

[2] The French Government joined in this expedition, having sent out their plenipotentiary, Baron de Gros, to demand satisfaction for the murder of certain missionaries.

the Minister, found the river blocked with booms under the guns of the forts. As the Admiral's demand for the removal of these obstructions was not complied with, he proceeded to blow open a passage, when a heavy and well-directed fire opened upon him from the forts. The swift current and intricate navigation placed the flotilla at great disadvantage, and after the unequal combat had been maintained for three days Admiral Hope was compelled to draw off, with the loss of three gunboats sunk, 89 officers and men killed and 345 wounded.

Naval disaster in the Pei-ho, July 1859.

Now, at last, England and France (for France lost some killed and wounded in this treacherous affair) had right on their side. Out went Lord Elgin and Baron de Gros once more, this time with an adequate force. The British commanders were General Sir J. Hope Grant and Admiral Hope. Landing a few miles north of the Pei-ho, the allies defeated the Chinese army at Tongku on 12th August 1860, capturing forty-five guns. On the 21st the Taku forts were taken by storm, and the road to Peking lay open. Advancing to Tientsin, the allies were met by the Emperor's Minister to negotiate for peace. Consul Parkes, Mr. Loch,[1] Mr. de Norman, with three French colleagues, were appointed delegates, and proceeded under a flag of truce to Tung-chao, where they arranged preliminaries with Prince Tsâi, representing the Emperor.

A camping-ground had been allotted to the allied force about five miles short of Tung-chao, but before they could occupy it a large Chinese army had surrounded the position. Parkes, Loch, and the other emissaries returned to Tung-chao under a flag of truce to remonstrate against this dangerous violation of agreement. They were seized and thrust into loathsome dungeons crowded with filthy Chinese prisoners, where thirteen out of twenty-six died in torment. Captain Brabazon, R.A., Lieutenant Anderson, and Mr. Bowlby were among these victims, their hands and feet being so tightly bound that the flesh burst and fatal mortification followed.

Both Elgin and his French colleague de Gros had done

[1] Lord Elgin's private secretary, created Lord Loch of Drylaw in 1895.

all in their power to avoid further hostilities. Elgin expressed his disbelief in the deliberate treachery of the Chinese Government, and laid the blame on their commander-in-chief, who was already in disgrace on account of his defeat at Tongku. But the Emperor and his people had to be held answerable for the acts of the general; the advance upon Peking was resumed; on 6th October the famous Summer Palace was taken and its incalculable treasures indiscriminately plundered; what could not be carried away being ruthlessly destroyed. The building itself was spared at first; but when Elgin became aware of the shameful suffering inflicted upon his countrymen who had been imprisoned in the Summer Palace and of the slaughter of half their number, he decreed that it should be utterly destroyed by fire. This was done, and the act was loudly condemned in England as wanton and barbarous; but in truth it was a wise deed, necessary to bring the Celestials to reason and to stop the war. On 24th October the treaty was ratified, whereby seven Chinese ports were thrown open to foreign trade.

Destruction of the Summer Palace, Peking, 6th Oct. 1860.

Treaty of Tientsin ratified, 24th Oct. 1860.

International ethics are hard to define, still harder to defend. England and France, possessing no rights in China, insisted upon certain rights being conceded to them, perceiving much advantage to be gained by access to Chinese markets. The Chinese rulers replied that they neither desired to receive Western goods nor to hear the Christian gospel. Having the example of the Mogul empire to guide them, they acted on the maxim, *Obsta principiis!* The European Powers declared that both goods and gospel must be admitted, and proceeded to force an entry, wasting the land, burning cities, and slaughtering the people in the old manner. Faint echo, herein, of the Sermon on the Mount, rulers of civilised nations having arrived at the conclusion that the meek stand a very poor chance of inheriting the earth.

While these events were taking their course in China, a tragedy of far greater intensity was being enacted in India.

On 29th February 1856, when Dalhousie was about to hand over to Lord Canning the great office which he had administered so vigorously for eight years, he wrote as follows to his Sovereign:—

"Lord Dalhousie will transfer the Government of India to him in a state of perfect tranquillity. There is peace within and without; and although no prudent man will ever venture to predict the certainty of continued peace in India, yet Lord Dalhousie is able to declare, without reservation, that he knows of no quarter in which it is probable that trouble will arise."[1]

In the following year, on 23rd June, high festival was held in London to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Plassey, the victory which added Bengal to the dominions of King George III. Greatly as electricity had accelerated the transit of news between the ends of the earth, it still took many weeks to convey intelligence from India to the seat of government. The last speech had been delivered, the last bumper quaffed, the last rocket in the rejoicings had soared and fallen, before terrible tidings burst upon England with the sudden violence of a tornado. The Sepoy army had risen in revolt, murdered their officers, proclaimed the pensioned King of Delhi, Bahadur Shâh, Emperor of India, whose sons held the city of Delhi with a disciplined force of 50,000 to 70,000 mutineers. For some months previously disquieting rumours of disaffection among the Company's native regiments had been flying about Lower Bengal; but before the Cabinet in London had recognised the actual presence of danger, the great convulsion known in history as the Indian Mutiny was at its height. It got the name of a mutiny because its earliest phase was the revolt of native troops; but it was far more than a mutiny; it was a rising of Indian nationalities against their European conquerors—a common insurrection of Hindú and Moslem against Christian ascendancy. The misrule and oppression by native princes had been clean forgotten by the people, just as the Scottish Highlanders who fought and bled to get

The Indian Mutiny, 10th May 1857.

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 179.

the auld Stuarts back again" gave no thought to what their grandsires had suffered under the former régime.

"The good old times—all times, when old, are good."

Dost Mahomed had shown in Cabul how the Feringhi might be dealt with;[1] were there not thousands of grievances against English officials to be wiped out?

Dalhousie, as has been shown, had not been rigidly scrupulous about the precise justice of the steps leading to the annexation of one principality after another. Convinced as he was of the capacity of the Indian races and their country for moral and material development, he was not less so of the hopelessness of reconciling Oriental autocracy with any permanent scheme of amelioration. In roads, railways, and telegraphs, in cheap postage, relief from taxation, and vernacular education, he perceived practical means of benefit to the millions committed to his care; dynasties and institutions that hindered progress of this kind were summarily swept aside. Sound and beneficial to the people as were the reforms instituted by Dalhousie, many of them outraged the feelings of a race to whom such reforms appeared as deadly sin. Such were the prohibition of burning widows on the pyres of their husbands and of female infanticide, the legalising of the remarriage of widows, the confusion of caste involved in railway travel, and the introduction of the mess system into prisons, which interfered with the religious obligation of every man to cook his own food. These reforms did not affect the Mohammedans, but they, in common with the Hindús, were greatly upset by the introduction of what was termed the land settlement, whereby the respective rights of owners and occupiers were equitably adjusted and the assessment of land taxes regulated accordingly.

Many statesmen have been compelled to recognise how far easier it is to generate discontent than gratitude. Dalhousie's administration had righted many wrongs and relieved tens of thousands from oppression; but it had also set afloat much ill-will, whereof interested agitators were

[1] See p. 124, *supra*.

not slow to make use. Still, these organisers of revolt found their efforts greatly hindered by that hereditary religious antipathy between Mohammedan and Hindú, which had so often proved a safeguard to British authority in India. Suddenly, by an extraordinary administrative oversight, a deadly affront was put upon the people of both religions. Experience of the Minié rifle, with which half the British infantry in the Crimea had been armed, had satisfied military men that the day of the smooth-bore musket—"Brown Bess" of Salamanca and Waterloo—was done; therefore in 1856 the Enfield rifle was issued to both the Queen's and the East India Company's troops. Now the lubricant applied to the cartridges of the new weapon was composed of beef-fat and hog's-lard; and, seeing that the cartridges had to be bitten before use, it would have been difficult to devise a simpler and surer insult to the feelings of Hindú and Mohammedan—the cow being held in peculiar sanctity by the Hindú, and the hog in special abhorrence by the Mohammedan.

The grease on the cartridges, 1856–1857.

It was a blunder for which monstrous penalty was to be exacted—a venial blunder as regards War Office officials in England, where the imperious obligations of caste can never be understood; but it was unpardonable in the military authorities of India to sanction the issue of ammunition smeared with animal fat to soldiers who could not handle it without pollution.

No sooner was attention called to the blunder than the issue of the new cartridge was stopped. This was in January 1857; but already the mischief had been done. Agents of sedition were busy instilling into the troops and the populace that a deliberate attempt had been made by the Government to destroy their caste and turn them into Christians.

Primitive communities have devised many modes of swift communication. In the Scottish Highlands of old the fiery cross, handed from hamlet to hamlet, summoned the clansmen to arms; along the Borders bale-fires leapt from height to height, rousing the riders; as sure, and hardly less swift, was the symbol of *chupatties*—little un-

leavened cakes, of which two were left with the head-man of every village in Northern India, with instructions to make similar cakes and pass them on. To this day the precise significance of these *chupatties* remains a mystery to Europeans: that it was of sinister import was very soon made clear.

In vain was Lord Canning's proclamation in May, explaining that the lubricant on the cartridges had been changed to an innocent mixture of oil and wax. Isolated acts of insubordination became more frequent, leading to the disbandment of three or four native regiments: it was at Meerut that matters first reached a sanguinary crisis. On Saturday, 9th May, the garrison of that great military centre was paraded to hear the sentence of ten years' penal servitude pronounced upon eighty-five men of the Bengal Cavalry who had refused to handle the service ammunition.[1] On Sunday evening following, three native regiments rose against their officers, killed eight of them, also the wives of three officers, two children, and several other European men and women, fired the cantonments, released their imprisoned comrades and 1100 other prisoners, and marched off to Delhi, a city with a seething population of 150,000 souls.

Revolt at Meerut, 10th May 1857.

This was the news that reached England forty-eight hours after the festival of Plassey. Palmerston made light of it to the Queen, informing her on 26th June that an extensive mutiny had taken place, but that he had "no fear of the results";[2] but it was impossible to allay the agony of anxiety that shook the country. When it became known that hundreds of British and Eurasian men, women, and

[1] This sentence was pronounced by a court-martial of six Mohammedan and nine Hindú officers, who recommended the prisoners to mercy. General Hewitt, commanding at Meerut, reduced the term to five years for soldiers of less than five years' service.

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 235. Palmerston may well be excused for failing to apprehend at once the gravity of the occasion, seeing that the Governor-General, Lord Canning, who was in Calcutta at the time, did not realise the nature of the crisis. On 31st May, three weeks after the outbreak at Meerut, when the very existence of the Government of India depended upon the recapture of Delhi, he telegraphed to the Commander-in-Chief, desiring him to detach one European regiment and some European cavalry to operate elsewhere (Roberts's *Forty-one Years in India*, i. 496 *note*).

children had been butchered—when it was rumoured that the wives of English officers and civilians had been outraged before being tortured to death—a cry for speedy vengeance went up from all the land.

Aye, but how was vengeance to be wrought? The European garrison of India was but a handful compared to the native troops and the armies of independent and tributary princes. Ministers at home, heedless of the grave lesson of 1854, had decreed retrenchment; Lord Panmure at the War Office had been cutting down establishments to meet the demands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.[1] Eight thousand troops were all that could be spared from England. "If we had not reduced in such a hurry this spring, we should now have all the men we wanted!"[2] Palmerston still refused to recognise the gravity of the situation. "The news is distressing," he wrote to Panmure on 29th June, "by reason of the individual sufferings and deaths, but it is not really alarming as to our hold upon India."[3] Even so late as 22nd August he expressed to the Queen his unwillingness to spend more upon the army than the ordinary amount voted, "without some urgent and adequate necessity." In the Queen's remonstrance against this untimely economy may be recognised, not only her own strong intelligence, but the technical military knowledge of the Prince Consort:[4]—

"The Queen, the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and the Press all call out for vigorous action, and the Government alone take an apologetic line, anxious to do as little as possible, to

[1] So late as 15th June, Panmure wrote to the Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief: "I quite admit the apparent niggardliness of this proceeding, but it is better to do these acts than to have the Chancellor of the Exchequer fix a sum for our expenditure about January, and in two months having to cut our coat according to his cloth" (*Panmure Papers*, ii. 395).

[2] Queen Victoria to Lord Panmure, 29th June (*Letters*, iii. 236).

[3] *Panmure Papers*, ii. 399.

[4] Hitherto the Queen's Albert had no rank except that of Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, which did not entitle him to receive in foreign Courts the precedence becoming to his actual position. To remedy this anomaly, the Queen by Order in Council issued Letters Patent, dated 25th June 1857, creating for him the rank and title of Prince Consort; reasonable enough, one should say, yet constitutional purists professed to detect impropriety in it.

wait for further news, to reduce as low as possible even what they do grant. . . . The Queen hopes the Cabinet will yet look the whole question in the face, and decide, while there is yet time, what they must know will become necessary, and what must, in the hurry at the end, be done less well and at probably double the cost. The Queen can speak by very recent experience, having seen exactly the same course followed in the late war."[1]

Her Majesty returned to the charge on 25th August:—

"The Queen must say that she is deeply grieved at her want of success in impressing upon Lord Palmerston the importance of meeting the present dangers by agreeing on, and maturing, a general plan by which to replace *in kind* the troops sent out of the country. . . . The War Office pride themselves upon having got 1000 men since the recruiting began: this is equal to 1000 a month, or 12,000 a year—the ordinary wear and tear of the army!! Where will the reserves for India be to be found? . . . The Queen must say that the Government incur a fearful responsibility towards their country by their apparent indifference. God grant that no unforeseen European complication fall upon this country; but we are really tempting Providence."[2]

Long before these words were written our countrymen in India had realised that they must not look to England for succour. No Briton can peruse the chronicle of that terrible summer without a glow of pride, clouded though it be with regret for the sacrifice of many a noble life. Soldiers and civilians rivalled each other in devotion; but devotion had been vain had not the emergency called into action dormant stores of endurance, courage, initiative, and resource, whereof those who displayed them cannot have been conscious of the existence.

It is true that there were isolated instances of deplorable inaction. At Meerut, for instance, there were the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabineers), a troop of Horse Artillery, a battery of Field Artillery, a company of Foot Artillery, and a battalion of the 60th Rifles,[3] quite enough to have effected the disarmament of the three native regiments in the garrison on the first symptom of insubordination. General Hewitt, commanding the division, may be judged leniently for refusing to take that precaution, unwilling to show distrust of the Sepoys with whom he had served for

[1] The Queen to Lord Palmerston, 22nd Aug. (*Letters*, iii. 244).
[2] Ibid., 245.
[3] Lord Roberts's *Forty-one Years in India*, i. 80.

fifty-one years; but both he and Brigadier Archdale Wilson showed lamentable indecision in presence of the outbreak, and culpable negligence in allowing the mutineers to depart without attempting to trace their destination. Nor can they be acquitted of unaccountable inactivity during the succeeding weeks.[1] It has been held that if Hewitt had acted promptly in the dusk of that bloody Sunday, the rebellion might have been stayed at the outset.[2]

Still more grave was the irresolution of Brigadier Johnstone at Jullundur. There, as at Meerut, were three native regiments, with H.M. 8th Foot and a troop of Horse Artillery. Johnstone had nearly a month's warning of what was impending; he refused to take common precaution against a rising, lest his Sepoys should be offended by suspicion. When at last they mutinied on 7th June, he allowed them to plunder the treasury and the houses of the English without an effort to interfere or to stop them marching off with the loot.

Impunity of this kind fanned the flame of revolt. Regiment after regiment rose, generally sparing their own officers, but eagerly shooting down those of other battalions. This *esprit-de-corps*, so creditable to both officers and men, had its peculiar danger in the passionate refusal of officers to distrust their men.[3] Thus, when all the European regiments were withdrawn from Sialkot to join Neville Chamberlain's movable column, Sir John Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, ordered all women and

[1] Major-General Hewitt was afterwards removed from his command; but Wilson succeeded to the command of the field-force at Delhi, and commanded the artillery at the siege of Lucknow.

[2] Lord Roberts does not share that opinion. "Considering the state of feeling throughout the native army, no action, however prompt, on the part of the Meerut authorities could have arrested the mutiny. The sepoys had determined to throw off their allegiance to the British Government, and the when and the how were merely questions of time and opportunity." (*Forty-one Years in India*, i. 91.)

[3] "It seems strange on looking back that these many warnings should have passed almost unheeded . . . but at that time the reliance on the fidelity of the native troops was unbounded, and officers believed implicitly in the contentment and loyalty of their men. Their faith in them was extraordinary. Even after half the native army had mutinied and many officers had been murdered, those belonging to the remaining regiments could not believe that their own particular men could be guilty of treachery." (*Forty-one Years in India*, i. 63.)

children to be sent for safety to Lahore. Brigadier Frederick Brind strongly remonstrated against such an affront being put upon his Sepoys; he would answer with his life for their loyalty, no matter what regiments elsewhere were doing. He was called on for payment of the price he had named. A few days later this brave officer's brains were blown out by one of his own orderlies.

It was this pathetic confidence of British officers in the men whom they had trained that gave the mutineers an initial advantage which they could never have secured otherwise. That the regard between them was mutual, there are many proofs on record—instances of soldiers exposing themselves to mortal danger to save the lives of their officers, before joining the mutineers in obedience to the transcendent obligations of caste and religion.[1] If wiser foresight had not prevailed at Peshawur, Lahore, and some other places than was forthcoming at Meerut, Agra, and Jullundur, nothing could have saved from annihilation the small and scattered European army and the British community in Upper India.

Loyalty of the Sikhs, 1857–58.

One thing, indeed, was wanting to make the convulsion complete, namely, the revolt of the Sikhs, the most warlike race in India, who, only eight years before, had inflicted upon British arms what must be acknowledged as the defeat of Chilianwala. While the rebellion was spreading like a forest fire through all the rest of the North-west Province and blazing through Oudh into Lower Bengal, while regiment followed regiment in the pillage and massacre of Christians, the Sikhs never wavered in fidelity to their Great White Queen. That was what saved the British Indian Empire—that, and the behaviour of British officers and civilians in the hour of trial.

Charles, Earl Canning, 1812–62.

It has been mentioned above that it was several weeks before Lord Canning realised the magnitude of the crisis. None the less was he called upon to exercise great presence of mind from the first. It is not agreeable to speculate what might have happened had that supreme faculty failed him. Of all

[1] *Forty-one Years in India*, i. 88.

the moods of the human creature there is none so ungovernable as fear. The suddenness of the outbreak, the rapidity with which it flared from station to station, and the dreadful massacres, which lost nothing in horror through report, created a wild panic in Calcutta, and Canning had to maintain his calm amid the insane counsels of terror. He was urged to make savage reprisals. The dethroned King of Oudh was living near Calcutta. Of all Dalhousie's annexations, that of Oudh was the least easy to justify. It cannot be denied that the Anglo-Indian conscience was sensitive about that transaction. It was rumoured that the King of Oudh was about to seize the opportunity for revenge, and people clamoured for his arrest. Canning responded by receiving the king and his vizier to reside in Government House. Then the clamour rose to frenzy; the public shrieked for the recall of "Clemency Canning"; but through all the tumult the Governor-General kept his head.

Happily, his was not the only cool head in authority. News of the rising at Meerut was telegraphed to Lahore, the capital of the Punjab, on 11th May. The Governor, Sir John Lawrence,[1] was absent at Rawal Pindi, leaving Commissioner Robert Montgomery[2] in authority. Four thousand Sepoys lay at Mian Mir, only five or six miles from the capital, and Montgomery had to decide on the instant whether they should be trusted or not. He employed a spy to ascertain their disposition; the report he received convinced him that not an hour must be wasted. His first task was to persuade Brigadier Corbett, commanding the troops, that prompt measures were necessary. Corbett was naturally unwilling to suspect the fidelity of his men, but he yielded to Montgomery's earnest warning. There was a ball in Lahore that night, attended by the civil and military officials of the district; but very few were informed of what had been decided. Parade at Mian Mir was ordered for daybreak on the 13th, much to the disgust of young officers who had been dancing all night. The native regiments were formed in line of columns;

Vigorous precaution at Lahore, 13th May 1857.

[1] Viceroy of India 1863–69; created Lord Lawrence in 1869.

[2] Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab 1859–65.

while the brigadier was explaining to them that they were to be disarmed in order to save them from the temptation of following the bad example of other corps, a troop of Horse Artillery and the 81st Foot formed line behind the columns, the guns of the Artillery being loaded with grape. The columns were then countermarched, which brought them face to face with the guns. When ordered to pile arms, the men had no choice between obedience and being blown to pieces.

The rifles were carried off in carts, and the station was taken over by 1300 European troops. This was perhaps the most critical moment of the mutiny. Had Montgomery and Corbett on the 12th May shown themselves as nerveless and resourceless as Hewitt and Wilson had done at Meerut on the 10th, the Punjab could not have been held.

It is difficult to attempt a survey, however brief, of events during the summer of 1857 without turning aside to notice acts of exceeding heroism performed by civilians as well as by soldiers. To do so would carry this narrative out of the prescribed limit, which will admit notice only of the general course of affairs. The darkest part of the story is that of Cawnpur. In May 1857 there were 3000 native troops in that place and about 300 Europeans, under command of Sir Hugh Wheeler, who was aged seventy-five. Having information that the native regiments were on the brink of mutiny, Wheeler appealed for assurance to a neighbouring prince, Sirik Dandhu Panth, who was the representative of the dethroned Peshwá of Poonah. Dandhu, popularly and better known as Nâná Sáhib, was rich and hospitable, delighting in entertaining English officers and their ladies at his palace near Cawnpur. He responded cordially to Wheeler's appeal, bringing 300 men and two guns to his assistance. But Náná cherished a secret grievance against the Government—not without substantial cause, let us admit; for, on the death of the last Peshwá, Dalhousie had refused to continue the pension to his adopted son Náná, thereby violating the Hindú principle that all the rights of sonship, material and spiritual, are conveyed by adoption.

Massacres at Cawnpur, 26th June, 15th July 1857.

Immediately after Náná's arrival at Cawnpur, on 4th June, the garrison rose in revolt, Náná putting himself at the head of the mutineers. Wheeler sought refuge in an old hospital with about 1000 Europeans, of whom 280 were women and about the same number of children. The building having been hastily entrenched, Wheeler refused Náná's summons to surrender. For nineteen days, under the Indian sun of June, did this handful of dauntless men defend their crumbling mud walls against Náná's thousands, who were reinforced by the men of Oudh. After a fierce and sustained assault had been repulsed, Náná felt that his influence with the rebels was at stake, and that he must get possession of the place in order to keep his force together. He offered to allow all the besieged who had not been connected with Dalhousie's administration a safe passage to Allahábád.

These terms were accepted. The little garrison had done all that flesh and blood and dauntless spirit could do. Their ammunition was nearly exhausted; they were face to face with famine. Two hundred and fifty of the besieged had perished since 4th June; on the 26th the survivors embarked on the Ganges in boats prepared for them by Náná. The women and children were all on board, the men were following, when, at the sound of a bugle, the straw awnings of the boats burst into flame and the native rowers leapt ashore. A fire of grape and musketry riddled the frail craft, until Tantia Topi, Náná's lieutenant, sounded the "Cease fire." Then the Englishwomen and children who remained alive, 125 in all, many of them grievously wounded, were collected and driven back to the town.

Only one of the boats got afloat, a target for marksmen on both banks as it drifted down the river. It was soon recaptured, and all on board—sixty-five men, twenty-five women, and four children—were haled back to Cawnpur. The men were shot at once; the women and children were thrust into the prison-house with the others. Eighteen women and seven children, more fortunate than the rest, soon died of disease.

Náná's dream of rule was short-lived, but his power for

evil outlasted it. Havelock, hastening to the relief of Cawnpur, encountered Tantia Topi at Tathipur on 12th July and scattered his army. On the 15th the news that his cause was lost reached Náná, lashing him to fury. For nearly three sultry weeks the Englishwomen and children had been cooped in their loathsome prison, without water to wash in or change of clothing. Death they would have welcomed whole-heartedly, and death Náná decreed that they should meet. A company of Sepoys was marched up to destroy them; they were ordered to fire through the windows, and they obeyed; but, touched by some strain of chivalry, they aimed high and harmlessly, and were recalled. At dusk five picked assassins were sent up and entered the house. Twice one of the butchers came out to exchange a broken, bloody sword for a fresh weapon. At last all was still; the five men, drenched in gore, left the shambles, locking the door behind them. In the morning a fatigue party was told off to clear out that fearful house of blood and fling the carcases down a dry well.

The well at Cawnpur! There is no spot in the British dominions to equal it in horror. The scenes enacted around it fired such a consuming passion for revenge as threatened to destroy for all time offices of goodwill between the white rulers and their dusky subjects. But the Angel of Peace in Marochetti's marble now marks the site; bright and fragrant flowers veil the soil once soaked with the blood of our countrywomen, and the crimes of Indians in their hour of madness are consigned to oblivion in the inscription on the shrine—"Sacred to the perpetual memory of a great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children."

Náná Sáhib had the hardihood to await Havelock's attack on 16th July. His troops were hopelessly routed; he fled from the field, and though no effort was spared to capture him, he never was heard of again. Of the whole European community at Cawnpur, only four men, two officers and two privates, survived, having escaped from one of the boats and obtained protection from a friendly rájá.

General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, had received instructions from Calcutta "to make short work of Delhi,"

and was most unjustly blamed for not advancing at once. He rightly declined to risk the annihilation of his meagre force, which was without tents, transport, spare ammunition, and siege guns. Not until 21st May did he feel himself in sufficient strength to assume the offensive; on the 24th he left Ambálá with the advanced column; on the 26th he was struck down by cholera, and died in a few hours. The command devolved on Sir Henry Barnard, who, after routing the rebels in a desperate encounter at Badli-ka-Saráí on 8th June, established himself on a ridge to the north-west of Delhi, but with a force far too weak in men and material to attempt the investment of such a city, garrisoned by 30,000 disciplined troops, besides an armed populace of many thousands. For several weeks the besiegers, if such they could be reckoned, lay waiting for reinforcements and a siege train. Sorties from the city occurred almost every day, resulting sometimes in the engagement of Barnard's whole force. Barnard himself died, smitten with cholera, on 5th July, and was succeeded by General Reid, who held the command only for twelve days, retiring on sick leave on the 17th, when General Archdale Wilson took over the command.

Death of the Commander-in-Chief, 26th June 1857.

Wilson, an experienced artillery officer, aged fifty-four, proved himself an able commander so long as his force was compelled to remain on the defensive; but after it had been raised by reinforcement in August to 10,948 effectives, whereof 3217 were British troops,[1] it became evident that the strain of anxiety, coupled with exposure to intolerable heat and the torrents of the monsoon, had so enfeebled both nerve and frame that he was unequal to taking the offensive.

On 13th August Brigadier John Nicholson appeared on the scene,

> Velut inter ignes
> Luna minores,

having fought his way in with the Punjab column. The

[1] *Forty-one Years in India*, i. 212, 213. There were 2977 men in hospital on 5th September.



General John Nicholson

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1910

presence of this splendid fighter changed the whole aspect of affairs. The incurable disability of most Indian generals was their age; Nicholson was only six-and-thirty, but he had seen much war. When he went with Gulab Singh to Kashmir in 1846 his personality so powerfully impressed the hill tribes of Hagara that they hailed him demi-god—Nikkul-seyn—and formed a brotherhood of fakirs for his worship. "A born commander," writes one who witnessed the effect wrought by his coming upon the spirit of the troops, "and this was felt by every officer and man with the column before he had been amongst them many days."[1]

John Nicholson, 1821–57.

It required such a man to save the Delhi field force, if not from destruction, certainly from discomfiture. On 20th August General Wilson wrote to Calcutta that he had no hope of taking Delhi without fresh reinforcements. Nicholson declared his intention, if Wilson hesitated any longer, of moving at a council of war to be held on 6th September that he should be superseded in the command.[2] Thus was Wilson's hand forced, and he became the captor of Delhi *malgré lui*.

The drama of Delhi must be read to a close in the narratives of some of the actors. Nicholson's dauntless determination, the supreme devotion of the troops entrusted to him for the assault, and the countless deeds of personal valour performed must here be condensed into the simple statement that Delhi was taken by storm on 14th September,[3] and that John Nicholson fell mortally wounded while leading the assault. He died young, yet his name shines in the roll of the world's great captains. May England in the hour of need never look in vain for such as he!

Capture of Delhi, 14th Sept., and death of Nicholson, 23rd Sept. 1857.

Passing notice must be given to an incident after the fall of Delhi which has been the subject of passionate reproach and reflection upon British honour. The old King of Delhi, with his two sons and grandson, had taken

[1] *Forty-one Years in India*, i. 138. [2] Ibid., i. 215.

[3] The British did not obtain mastery of the whole city until 20th September, after much sanguinary street fighting.

refuge in a vast enclosure outside the city, the tomb of Emperor Humayún, which was strongly garrisoned by mutineers. A dashing young officer named Hodson, commanding a corps of irregular cavalry known as Hodson's Horse, asked General Wilson for permission to capture them. Wilson gave reluctant consent, on condition that the king's life should be preserved. Hodson rode up quietly with an escort of 100 sowars and called on the garrison to lay down their arms. They did so at once, under the impression that he must have plenty of support at hand, and the old king was taken into Delhi. It had been well for his own reputation had Hodson rested content with this exploit; but he thought it dangerous to allow the three princes to go free. Besides, it was believed that they had directed the massacre of Englishmen and women when the mutineers first got possession of Delhi, so he returned next day to the tomb to fetch the princes. An angry mob pressed upon his slender escort on their way back to the city. Hodson, apprehending, as he afterwards said, an attempt at rescue, summoned the princes before him and shot them with his own hand—an act which, however difficult to justify in retrospect, was leniently regarded in that year of wrath; nor can it be denied that grave trouble might have been the result if the Princes of Delhi had made their escape. British rule in India was at stake; British troops were pitted against an enemy enormously outnumbering them—an enemy who, in hundreds of instances, had set the laws of civilised warfare at defiance. If Hodson's act cannot be fully condoned, palliation may be found in the hideous nature of the struggle that had been forced upon our people.[1]

Sir Colin Campbell appointed Commander-in-Chief, 11th July 1857.

The news of General Anson's death reached Lord Palmerston on a Saturday. He sent at once for Sir Colin Campbell, offered him the Indian command, and asked him when he would be ready to start. "Within twenty-four hours," was the prompt reply; no figure of speech, we may be sure, for this man of action sailed next day, Sunday,

[1] Hodson was killed at the siege of Lucknow in March 1858.

without bothering himself about an outfit.[1] Sir Colin was in his sixty-fifth year. His real surname was Macliver, his father being a carpenter in Glasgow; but when his maternal uncle, Colonel Campbell, obtained for him an ensigncy in the 9th Foot, the commission was made out in error in the name of Campbell. His first taste of victory was under Arthur Wellesley at Vimeiro; he served through Sir John Moore's campaign to its close at Coruña, and he had several years' experience of war in China and India; but in England he was chiefly known as commander of the Highland Brigade in the Crimea. He landed at Calcutta on 14th August, to find that the Bengal army had not only "disappeared," as the Duke of Cambridge expressed it,[2] but had reappeared as a well-equipped hostile force, augmented by an inexhaustible supply of recruits. The first reinforcements from England were just arriving (in sailing transports, for the Admiralty still distrusted steam except as an auxiliary power); it was not until 9th November that Sir Colin had enough troops to enable him to take the field. By that time, Delhi having fallen, the imperative object was the relief of Lucknow, where Sir Henry Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of Oudh, with admirable foresight, had fortified and provisioned the Residency. The siege was opened on 1st July; next day Lawrence was mortally wounded by a shell as he was sitting at his desk, and the command devolved upon Brigadier John Inglis, who proved himself of sterling quality. His garrison consisted of H.M. 32nd Foot, a small detachment of H.M. 84th Foot, three native regiments of infantry, and some European and native artillery.[3]

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, ii. 137. [2] *Panmure Papers*, ii. 439.

[3] On 25th September Inglis had thirty guns in position, with twenty-four gunners to serve them! The fidelity of the native soldiers of this garrison was in striking contrast with the widespread defection of their countrymen. It is no more than bare justice to these gallant fellows to quote Brigadier Inglis's words in his official report of the siege: "With respect to the native troops, I am of opinion that their loyalty has never been surpassed. They were indifferently fed and worse housed. They were exposed . . . to a most galling fire of round shot and musketry, which materially decreased their numbers. They were so near the enemy that conversation could be carried on between them; and every effort, persuasion, promise, and threat, was alternately resorted to in vain to seduce them from their allegiance to the handful of Europeans who, in all probability, would have been sacrificed by their desertion."

The British inhabitants of the station furnished numerous volunteers, but the difficulty of defence was enhanced by the presence of 220 women and 230 children. Henry Lawrence was no more, but it was owing to the far-seeing energy with which, so long before as the month of April, he had begun laying in stores and constructing defensive works, that Inglis was able to keep the besiegers at bay until 25th September—to that, I say, and to the extraordinary staunchness of the garrison, both European and native, which dwindled daily under the enemy's fire and the ravages of disease.[1] Week followed week, and hope burned low among the survivors, for relief seemed as far off as ever. Suddenly one morning, amid the thunder of the guns, a shrill, far-off sound reached the ears of a watcher within the Residency. Oh sweet discordancy! no choir of angels could have so quickly revived the fainting hearts within those tottering walls, for that rude strain came from Highland war-pipes.

Siege of Lucknow, 1st July–17th Nov. 1857.

Relief was indeed here at last on this 25th of September, for Havelock and Outram,[2] having joined hands on the 10th, had hewn their way to Lucknow. Relief, but not release, for although Havelock forced an entrance to the Residency, he was in turn hemmed in by immense masses of rebels, and the siege was renewed. By night and day the cannonade was almost continuous; assault and sortie succeeded each other in fruitless iteration, and the suffering of the besieged became intense.

First relief of Lucknow, 25th Sept. 1857.

"Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
Stench of old offal decaying and infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be healed.

. . . . . .

Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief."

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[1] H.M. 32nd Regiment mustered only 300 of all ranks when relieved in November.

[2] Outram, "the Bayard of India," was the senior general, but chivalrously declined to deprive Havelock of the honour of relieving Lucknow. The total force with them was some 2500 men, including Peel's bluejackets, and 17 guns.

At last, on 9th November, Sir Colin Campbell had received enough reinforcement from England to enable him to leave Calcutta with about 6000 men and 36 guns. On the 17th he attacked the rear of the rebel lines, while Havelock made a simultaneous sortie upon their front. Campbell himself led the final assault and opened a way to the Residency; but he could not hold Lucknow. On the night of the 22nd November he brought away those of the garrison and residents who remained alive, among them Dr. Brydon, sole survivor of the Cabul column in 1842. Havelock, to whom that war-worn, famine-stricken remnant chiefly owed their deliverance, lived just long enough to see his task accomplished. He died at Dilkusha on the 24th. If Lord Canning's calm resolution, John Nicholson's iron will, the foresight and experience of the brothers Lawrence, the bold promptitude of Herbert Edwardes and Robert Montgomery must be accounted the chief agents in holding the insurgents in check at the outset, it was Havelock's soldierly genius and cool courage in the face of overwhelming numbers that first broke their military organisation.

Second relief of Lucknow, 17th Nov. 1857.

Death of Sir Henry Havelock, 24th Nov. 1857.

Sir Colin encamped at Dilkusha, not far in rear of the enemy's siege works, which formed a girdle of twenty miles round Lucknow; but he had to suspend operations against them, and, leaving Outram in observation, hurried off to Cawnpur, where General Wyndham had met with a reverse from the army of Gwalior. Having recaptured that place of dreadful memory, he rejoined Sir Hope Grant before Lucknow, which was taken by assault on 19th March 1858. It throws light on the magnitude of what we speak of as a mutiny that the enemy lost more than 2000 killed in the final assault, besides one hundred guns.

Capture of Lucknow, 19th March 1858.

Sir Colin now carried his victorious arms into Oudh, where he received valuable support from the Nepalese Minister and General, Jung Bahádur, whose Gurkhas Lord Roberts esteemed as "probably the bravest race of men in the world."[1] Before the end of 1858 Oudh had been

[1] *Forty-one Years in India*, i. 402.

restored to subjection, the *tálukdárs* and landowners, nearly all of whom had been in active revolt, hastening to renew their allegiance.

In no part of Hindostan did the fires of rebellion burn more fiercely than among the great Marhattá nation. The Mahárájá Scindia of Gwalior and the Mahárájá Holkar of Indore were both very young men, and might readily have seized the occasion for wiping out old scores against the British by putting their armies in the field against them. Their troops took the field, indeed, but without their hereditary princes. Scindia escaped to Agra when his mutinous regiments seized Gwalior, and both he and Holkar rendered services during the war which deserve grateful and lasting remembrance.

Loyalty of Scindia and Holkar, 1857-58.

The Rani of Jhánsi, a princess of indomitable spirit, fought long and hard against Sir Hugh Rose[1] in Central India. She rode in battle like an Oriental Jeanne d'Arc, and fell there, sabre in hand, at the head of her people. The last to hold out was Tantia Topi, sometime lieutenant to Náná Sáhib, who had put himself at the head of Scindia's revolted men of Gwalior; but he too was taken in April 1859, and hanged for his share in the massacre of Cawnpur.

[1] Created Lord Strathnairn in 1866.

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CHAPTER XIV

The East India Company—Its authority assumed by the Crown—Suspension of Bank Charter Act—The Orsini bombs—Conspiracy to Murder Bill—Defeat and resignation of the Government—Lord Derby's Second Administration—Government of India Bills—Disraeli's Reform Bill rejected—Dissolution of Parliament and fall of the Ministry—Jewish disabilities removed—Lord Palmerston's Second Administration—The Italian Revolution—Dissension in the Cabinet—Prospect of French invasion—The Volunteer movement—Commercial treaty with France—The paper duties—The Lords throw out the Paper Duties Bill—Effect upon Mr. Gladstone.

THE great Mutiny had been quelled, but such an upheaval could not convulse Hindostan without shaking down all that was unstable or unsound in its form of government. It was nearly twenty years since Macaulay had deplored the indifference of Englishmen to their great inheritance in the East.[1] The British public, even the average English Parliament man, knew indeed of the existence of a British empire in India—could perhaps lay no hesitating finger upon Calcutta in the map. But for most of us Indian affairs and politics lay wholly outside the range of accurate thought, until they were violently thrust into notice by the Mutiny. Then the nation awoke to the dangerous anomaly of this mighty dominion, peopled by more than two hundred million inhabitants, being governed by the directors of a trading company, who exercised the civil and military authority of empire, vested in them by a charter of Queen Elizabeth. Parliament, indeed, had imposed upon "John Company" limitations and restrictions from time to time. In 1784 Pitt instituted the Board of Control; in 1793 Dundas established the dual government on a firmer base; in 1813 the Company was deprived of its trading monopoly with India; in 1833 they were prohibited from trading altogether, and in 1853 the Crown assumed the right to nominate one-third of the directors;

[1] Paper on Lord Clive, *Edinburgh Review*, January 1840.

so that the authority of the Company, once sovereign and irresponsible, had been subjected to the control of the Crown and Parliament. Still there remained the anomaly, archaic in theory and hazardous in practice, of a commercial company maintaining an army and navy within the dominions of the Crown, and directing the affairs of a very large portion of these dominions. The annexation of Oudh, least defensible of all Dalhousie's acts of State, had been forced upon him, against his judgment and inclination, by the Court of Directors. It was not alleged that, subsequent to 1784, the Directors had abused the powers remaining to them; but the time had arrived when, for the safety of the Empire, the Crown should assume full and undivided responsibility for the dominion created by the commercial enterprise of its subjects.

The East India Company, 1606–1858.

The proposals of the Cabinet for the better government of India were laid before committee of the whole House in a series of resolutions, which were afterwards embodied in a Bill transferring the administration from the Company to the Crown. Such transference could not be effected without disturbing many vested interests, and the measure was vigorously opposed in its initial stage. Disraeli opposed it mainly on the ground of the financial liability, which he professed to foresee would be thrown on the Imperial exchequer; but most Conservatives outside the House, and many within it, still entertained profound distrust of that brilliant debater. They had far more confidence in "Old Pam." The servants of the Company found an able advocate in John Stuart Mill, himself one of their number, and son of the historian of India. He was not yet in Parliament, but he published a vehement protest against the scheme for "converting the administration of India into a thing to be scrambled for by the second and third class of English parliamentary politicians." Nevertheless, public opinion had become so deeply impressed with the urgency for change that, after three nights' debate on the motion for leave to introduce the Bill, Disraeli failed to muster more than 173 votes against 318, giving

Its authority assumed by the Crown, 2nd Aug. 1858.

Palmerston the extraordinary majority of 145. As the Prime Minister walked home after the division with the Attorney-General, Sir Richard Bethell, his companion told him that, like a Roman consul in a triumph, somebody should be told off to remind him that he was mortal.[1]

Palmerston had to wait exactly twenty-four hours for a reminder. Probably no Minister ever enjoyed more popularity than he did at the beginning of 1858—popularity, not merely in the sense of being a favourite with the public and the press, but in the far more unusual one of receiving the approval and reliance of men of all parties. No administration ever appeared less likely to be overthrown. It had dealt successfully with an alarming financial crisis and commercial panic in the previous autumn, when five British banks had closed their doors with a total liability of £24,000,000, 146 mercantile firms had failed,[2] the extreme measure had been taken of suspending the Bank Charter Act on 12th November, and the Bank of England had received authority to exceed the statutory limits for discounts and advances. The Ministry had weathered that storm only to be capsized by a sudden squall from a different quarter.

Suspension of Bank Charter Act, 12th Nov. 1857.

Felice Orsini, for many years an energetic member of Mazzini's Young Italy party, had been sentenced to the galleys for life in 1844, but was liberated under the amnesty proclaimed on the accession of Pope Pio IX. in 1846. Arrested again in 1854, he made a romantic escape from prison in Mantua and came to London, then, as now, the sanctuary of political refugees from all ends of the earth. Being a good-looking fellow, well-mannered if not well-born, he became a bit of a lion in the hospitable metropolis, and roared to admiration before crowded meetings of those who, like the Athenians of old, "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Presently Orsini disappeared from the platform; nor was he to be found any more at the dinner-tables of fashionable London.

The Orsini bombs, 14th Jan. 1858.

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, ii. 142.
[2] *Annual Register*, pp. 200, 201.

He was heard of next in Paris, where, on 14th January, he lay in wait with three other desperadoes at the door of the Opera House in the Rue Lepelletier until the Emperor and Empress of the French drove up, when three bombs were thrown at their carriage with terrific effect. The intended victims escaped without hurt, but ten bystanders were killed on the spot, and no fewer than 156 were wounded, including Orsini himself, who was afterwards disposed of at the guillotine.

All this was dreadful enough, yet its connection with the stability of the Palmerston government may appear remote. That soon became manifest in a flare of indignation beyond the Channel. Perfidious Albion! harbouring our assassins and lending them workshops for the manufacture of bombs, how can we keep friends with such a neighbour? French journalists, unanimous for once, demanded reparation, not careful to pick phrases in such a matter. Englishmen, as a rule, do not peruse French newspapers, and the trouble might have passed off in a week, had not the reasonable means adopted to make it do so been curiously misunderstood in England. The French Foreign Minister, Count Walewski, instructed the French ambassador at St. James's, Count Persigny, to make representations to Queen Victoria's Government.

"Her Britannic Majesty's Government," Persigny was instructed to say,

"can assist us in averting a repetition of such guilty enterprises by affording us a guarantee of security which no State can refuse to a neighbouring State, and which we are entitled to expect from an ally. Full of confidence in the exalted reason of the English Cabinet, we abstain from all indication as regards the measures which it may be suitable to take. We rely on them for a careful appreciation of the decision which they shall judge most proper, and we congratulate ourselves in the firm persuasion that we shall not have appealed in vain to their conscience and their loyalty."

Hardly could remonstrance have been expressed more courteously, and Palmerston, recognising the grounds for remonstrance as most reasonable, directed a measure to be prepared which, while preserving inviolate the right of

asylum, should provide some check upon the projects of dangerous desperadoes, whether native or alien. Accordingly a Bill was prepared making conspiracy to murder a felony, punishable with a maximum of five years' penal servitude. Kinglake the historian, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Roebuck were among those who spoke against the motion for leave to introduce it, but, Disraeli and the Conservatives supporting the Government, the objectors only mustered 99 to 299 on a division.

Conspiracy to Murder Bill, Feb. 1858.

A most moderate measure, certainly not erring on the side of severity, and assured of an easy passage through all its stages. Yet the Bill, and more than the Bill, were on the brink of shipwreck. Before its introduction, Mr. Roebuck moved the adjournment on 5th February to call attention to the language of the *Moniteur*, official organ of the French Emperor, in reference to the English nation, which it described as "a den of conspirators." Calumnies had been uttered also by Ministers in the French Assembly—were we going to take this sort of thing lying down? Further, it was understood that M. de Persigny had dared to repeat the accusation and to insist upon an alteration in British criminal law. What answer had been returned to such a demand? Palmerston replied in pooh-pooh style; certainly, M. de Persigny's despatch shall be laid before the House—nothing in it of the nature suggested by the hon. member, who, by-the-bye, considering the range of his own rhetoric, is scarcely one to object to intemperate utterance by others!

The subject dropped; the Bill, as aforesaid, was introduced on the 8th February; before it came for second reading on the 19th the persistently insulting tone of the French press had roused pretty general resentment. Persigny's despatch was published; what reply did he get? was the cry, which Palmerston was in no hurry to answer. Then the alarm was sounded. People got it into their heads that the Conspiracy to Murder Bill had been prepared at the dictation of the French Foreign Office, and that Palmerston, of all men, had been cowed

by the *Moniteur* into surrendering the sacred right of asylum. The division on the second reading was taken on the very next day after Palmerston's great triumph on the Indian Government. Seldom have public favour and confidence been withdrawn so suddenly and causelessly from a Minister; not very often have the vices inherent to party government been so glaringly patent. Disraeli, who had supported the measure ten days before, certainly understood the custom of friendly nations better than to credit the calumny on the Prime Minister. He must have known how little was required to allay the just irritation in Paris, how just and reasonable that little was in itself, and how grave might become the issues entailed by refusing it; but when he saw Radicals and Peelites united against the Bill he could not resist the temptation of a party victory. He led 146 Conservatives into the "No" lobby, with the result that Ministers were left in a minority of 19—234 to 215.[1]

Defeat and resignation of the Government, 20th Feb. 1858.

Now Milner Gibson's amendment, whereon this division was taken, merely provided that the Bill should be postponed until Palmerston should lay his answer to Walewski's letter. But the debate had turned on the merits of the Bill itself, Mr. Gladstone, who voted in the majority, having persuaded himself that "a measure passed by this House of Commons—the chief hope of freedom—which attempts to establish a moral complicity between us and those who seek safety in repressive measures, will be a blow and a discouragement to that sacred cause in every country in the world." Had the question been the suspension of Habeas Corpus, such language might have fitted the occasion; but as the deliverance of a luminous intellect upon a proposal to alter murderous conspiracy from a

[1] Palmerston told the Queen that Derby had deliberately planned the manœuvre (*Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 265), but Derby assured her it was unpremeditated, and that, "as to his own people . . . the amendment of Mr. Milner Gibson was so skilfully worded that it was difficult for them to vote against it. He (Derby) had to admit this when they came to him to ask what they should do, merely warning them to save the measure itself, which the amendment did" (ibid., 267). The arch-conspirators really were Russell and Graham, Russell thereby effecting a *riposte* on Palmerston's "tit-for-tat."

misdemeanour into a felony, applying equally to British subjects and to aliens, it was only sonorous rhetoric. Nevertheless, Palmerston insisted upon treating the defeat as a vote of censure, and resigned. Lord Derby undertook to form a government in face of the depressing circumstance that the normal working majority against him in the House of Commons was about one hundred. No help to be had from the Peelites; Lord Grey, Newcastle, Gladstone, and the rest declining all overtures; indeed Derby told the Queen, "with deep regret," that he much doubted whether he could persuade his son, Lord Stanley, to join him. However, filial regard induced Stanley to take the Colonial Office, a post which, when offered to him three years previously by Palmerston, he had declined, only out of consideration for his father; for Stanley was in truth a far more advanced Liberal than Palmerston.

Lord Derby's Second Administration, 25th Feb. 1858–11th June 1859.

The prospect before the new Ministry was not alluring. A rupture with France—and the rejection of the Conspiracy to Murder Bill had set matters drifting that way—would have found Great Britain at serious disadvantage, for the mortal struggle in India was still raging. Happily the French Emperor's attention was concentrated upon another project, wherewith war with England was not compatible. Perhaps, also, he recalled the years when, as himself political refugee, he had availed himself of the British right of asylum. Persigny, having become offensively truculent, communicating to Palmerston confidential conversations with the new Foreign Secretary, Lord Malmesbury, was recalled,[1] his successor being Lord Raglan's old Crimean colleague, Maréchal Pelissier, Duc de Malakoff. The presence of this fine old soldier in London did much to restore equanimity. People forgot the unfriendly sentiments of French journalists, and called to mind the comradeship established in the trenches before Sebastopol.

When Parliament met on 12th March, Disraeli was able to announce that "the painful misconceptions" that had

[1] The Queen considered that Walewski was to blame, and that he had behaved ill to Persigny (*Letters*, iii. 276).

arisen between the two nations had been "terminated in a spirit entirely friendly and honourable."

The government of India was the most urgent question to be dealt with—a delicate affair for Disraeli to handle, seeing that only a month before he had advised the House to leave it alone. Palmerston's Bill, henceforth known as India Bill No. 1, was still on the order book. Disraeli introduced India Bill No. 2, differing from the other in the important respect that it provided for a Council partly elective. This pleased no party; Radicals denouncing it as a sham, intended to cloak the despotic character of the Council; Conservatives distrusting the application of the elective principle to India.

Government of India Bills, 1858.

It is one of the duties of the leader of the House to prepare for the Sovereign a brief report of the proceedings at each sitting. Disraeli, a master of pungent summary, provided extremely readable notes, much in contrast with the dry paragraphs of his predecessors in office.[1] This is how he sketched the fate of India Bill No. 2:—

"12*th April* 1858.—House reassembled—full. Chancellor of Exchequer much embarrassed with impending statement on the part of your Majesty's servants that they intended to propose Resolutions on the Government of India, instead of at once proceeding with their Bill. Received, five minutes before he took his seat, confidential information that Lord John Russell, wishing to defeat the prospects of Lord Palmerston, and himself to occupy a great mediatory position, intended himself to propose the mezzotermine of resolutions."[2]

Howbeit the House, with whom Lord John never was a favourite, would have none of his mediation, but insisted upon the Government producing their resolutions, whereon India Bill No. 3 was framed and passed without further difficulty. It provided for government by a Secretary of State and a council of fifteen, seven to be nominated by the

[1] His Report on the first night under the new administration concluded as follows: "Your Majesty once deigned to say that your Majesty wished in these remarks to have the temper of the House placed before your Majesty, and to find what your Majesty could not meet in the newspapers." The Queen certainly got what she wanted from Disraeli, for journalistic enterprise did not at that time attempt the picturesque reporting which is now demanded.

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 279.

directors and eight by the Crown. The Governor-General became Viceroy, the Indian navy was discontinued, and the twenty-four European regiments in the Company's service were amalgamated with the Queen's army.

During this session the Government owed its survival partly to the creditable desire of the great majority of the House to raise the question of Indian administration above the vulgar arena of party, and partly to the temporary disorganisation of the Opposition. Besides the feud between Palmerston and Russell, there arose sharp difference on the subject of Lord Canning's management of Indian affairs. Lord Ellenborough, who sat in the Cabinet as President of the Board of Control, succeeded no better in that capacity than he had done as Governor-General. He had addressed a severe reprimand to Canning respecting certain measures taken for the settlement of Oudh, into the merits whereof one is not to be tempted to enter after the lapse of fifty years. It served Mr. Cardwell for a motion of censure on the Government; with which he persevered through three full nights' debate, albeit Lord Ellenborough had atoned for his indiscretion by frankly avowing full responsibility and resigning his office on 11th May. Nobody expected the Government to weather the breeze; nevertheless, so deeply divided were the Opposition—some grateful to Canning for having saved India, others denouncing him as a vindictive tyrant, a third section striking at Canning in order to wound Palmerston—that, when the House was about to resume the debate on the fourth evening, Palmerston, "embarrassed, with a faint smile . . . announced the withdrawal of the motion of censure."[1]

This was tantamount to a vote of confidence. Nothing thereafter could shake Ministers, during that session at least; yet had their fame been clearer to have fallen with a united front. It was their leaders who brought discord among them.

Disraeli had once taunted Palmerston with having no domestic policy. "His external system," he said, "is turbulent and aggressive, that his rule at home may be tranquil and unassailed." Much of Palmerston's popularity was

[1] Disraeli to the Queen (*Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 290).

owing to his disinclination to excite apprehension. Like Melbourne, he preferred to leave difficult domestic questions alone. He was careful to give as little offence as possible at home, indifferent to the enmities he might create abroad. Least of all was he disposed to reopen the question of parliamentary reform. But Disraeli, greatly relishing the idea of taking the wind out of Lord John Russell's sails, easily persuaded Lord Derby, a reformer from the first, that the time for action had come; for was not John Bright stirring the North to agitate for a broader franchise?

Disraeli's Reform Bill, 1859.

Here was no question of yielding, as in 1832 and 1846, to an imperious popular demand. Bright had roused no enthusiasm among Lancashire artisans; the nation, as a whole, remained apathetic. The Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill was a deliberate piece of party tactics—a barefaced bid for popularity, without even the poor excuse of being opportunist, for nobody wanted the change. Tactically it proved a grievous miscarriage, yielding leaders no popularity in the country, but creating permanent distrust among resentful followers. For the next five-and-twenty years the Conservative party must subsist upon such negative nourishment as may be derived from the discontent of interests harassed by Liberal energy, until Mr. Gladstone shall come to its rescue, providing it once more with a clear-cut principle in resisting his Irish policy.

The chief provision in Disraeli's Bill was the lowering of the county franchise to £10, thus equalising it with the borough franchise. The proposal cost its authors the loss of two colleagues—Spencer Walpole, Home Secretary, and Joseph Henley, President of the Board of Trade—who resigned rather than have any hand in the measure. Neither would the Radicals look at it, seeing that it left out the working classes—a clumsy trick, said bluff John Bright, to add weight to the landed interest. Russell viewed it as a poaching incursion upon his own peculiar preserve; it was upon an amendment moved by him that the Government, after seven nights' debate, were defeated by a combination of those who hated the Bill because it went too far and of those who complained that it

did not go far enough. Ministers were left in a minority of thirty-nine; an appeal to the constituencies brought them a gain of only some five-and-twenty seats. The Derby Government—"unwept, unhonoured, and unsung"—received its *coup de grâce* on 11th June at the hand of the young Marquess of Hartington,[1] who moved an amendment to the address and carried it by thirteen votes.

Dissolution of Parliament and fall of Ministry, May–June 1859.

Before parting with this stopgap Ministry, let there be reckoned to its score one substantial piece of good work besides the Indian Government Act. Just thirty years had passed since Lord John Russell succeeded in persuading Wellington and Peel to assent to what was pronounced at the time to be "the first successful blow that had been aimed at the supremacy of the Established Church since the Revolution"[2]—namely, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. So now, in 1858, it was on Russell's initiative that the disability was removed which, for ten years, had prevented Baron Rothschild, one of the members for the City of London, from taking his seat. Lord Derby and his colleagues were opposed to the proposal to admit Jews to Parliament by omitting, from the parliamentary oath, as proposed by Russell the words "on the true faith of a Christian"; but the sense of the House of Commons was so overwhelming in favour of the relief that the difficulty was got over in the House of Lords by means of a Bill introduced by Lord Lucan, empowering either House to alter its form of oath at discretion. The effect of the admission of Jews to the legislature cannot be more justly described than in the words of Mr. Herbert Paul—"Parliament was not perceptibly less Christian than it was before."[3]

Removal of Jewish disabilities, 1858.

Lord Derby accepted his defeat and resigned at once,

[1] Succeeded as 8th Duke of Devonshire in 1891, d. 1908. "Lord Hartington spoke like a gentleman," was Disraeli's report to the Queen; but none of Hartington's hearers could discern in the halting, monotonous utterance the promise of the remarkable influence which the speaker should one day possess over the fortunes of his party.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1828, p. 96.

[3] *History of Modern England*, ii. 179.

leaving his Sovereign in no little perplexity to find his successor. Palmerston and Russell, ex-premiers both, each expecting to be sent for—no peace, anyhow, unless both are in the Cabinet; peace not well assured, even if we fit them both in. Would they serve "most agreeably to their own feelings by acting under a third person?"[1] Lord Granville, for instance; has not his very nickname, "Pussy," a soothing sound? Let us try whether he can keep these troublesome children from breaking each other's toys. Granville, knowing the children's temper, has misgivings, but will do his best, your Majesty. To Palmerston first, then, who will be proud to serve under the noble lord, but of course will keep the leadership of the House of Commons. Agreed by Granville, who, sounding Russell next, finds him quite willing to serve as proposed, but—ah, these buts!—feels that "he can not give effect to his political views unless he is either Prime Minister or leader of the House of Commons."[2] Our hope, then, is in Palmerston; will he take a peerage, and so leave Russell to lead the House of Commons? No, he'll be—shot if he does! Why not send Johnny Russell to the Lords? Because he won't go there; moreover, he now declares that the second place in the Ministry is the lowest he will accept, and nothing will induce him to be content with the third. *O motus animarum! atque o certamina tanta!* They were beyond Granville's emollient power to assuage, and he gave up the attempt.

Lord Palmerston's Second Administration, 1st July 1859–6th July 1865.

The Queen, determined that Palmerston should not return to the Foreign Office, now charged him with the duty of forming a government, which it took him more than a fortnight to do. Russell accepted the Foreign Office, and Gladstone sealed his severance with his old colleagues by becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer. Palmerston tried his best to get Richard Cobden, one of his bitterest critics, to join the Cabinet, but Cobden could not condone where he had so fiercely condemned. Granville or Russell he would have accepted as chief, but Palmerston—never!

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 344.
[2] Ibid., 345. *Life of Russell*, ii. 307.

The Cabinet came to the verge of rupture before it was a fortnight old, and it remained on that verge for more than six months. While the battle of the hustings was running its noisy course in the British Isles, a deadlier, costlier conflict was nearing its close in southern Europe. The Emperor Louis Napoleon, a ceaseless schemer, had taken up arms for the ostensible cause of *l'Italie rendue à elle-même*. He was splendidly served by General Macmahon, who on the fields of Magenta (4th June) and Solferino (24th June) inflicted sanguinary defeat upon the Austrians, believed at the time to possess the most perfect military organisation in the world, and driven them to the shelter of the Quadrilateral —the fortresses defending Venetia. Had Louis Napoleon remained in Paris, Macmahon might have effected the liberation of Italy; but he chose to be at the seat of war, and he had no nerve for its realities. Napoleon the Great could view with philosophic calm a land turned into a shambles; Napoleon the Less recoiled from the slaughter without which his enemy could not be ousted from the Quadrilateral. He sought means for a dignified retreat through the mediation of Great Britain.

The Italian Revolution, 1859–61.

Now the general sentiment in Britain was strongly in sympathy with the Italian patriots.[1] Lord Derby's Government, loyal to the treaty obligations of 1815 and profoundly distrustful of the Emperor of the French, had forfeited their chance of popularity by refusing submission to that sentiment. More than any other influence had "the fiery doctrine of nationality" prevailed to detach Gladstone from the Conservative party.[2] Palmerston, on taking office, had professed the strict neutrality of the British Government; nevertheless, so warmly did both he and Russell

[1] Mr. Justin M'Carthy has shown less than his usual dispassionate fairness in dealing with this sentiment. "It is much to be feared," says he, "that the popular enthusiasm for the unity and independence of Italy . . . was only enthusiasm against the Pope" (*History of our Own Times*, iii. 95). Englishmen had no cause of quarrel with the papacy at this time; their attitude towards it had become one of passive resistance, but they were profoundly moved by the horrors of Neapolitan prisons, and cordially wished to see Italy more than a mere "geographical expression."

[2] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 2.

espouse the cause of Italian liberation, that, when the Emperor of the French invited mediation, they advised the Queen to give him "the moral support which is asked." The Queen replied promptly on the same day—10th July:—

"She does not consider the Emperor of the French justified in asking the support of England to proposals he means to make to his antagonist to-morrow. He made war on Austria in order to wrest her two Italian kingdoms from her, which were assured to her by the treaties of 1815, to which England is a party. . . . The Queen having declared her neutrality, to which her Parliament and people have given unanimous assent, feels bound to adhere to it. She conceives Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston ought not to ask her to give her moral support to one of the belligerents. As for herself, she sees no distinction between moral and general support; the moral support of England *is* her support, and she ought to be prepared to follow it up."[1]

Dissension in the Cabinet, 1859-60.

The situation was intensely and critically delicate. The Queen, believing that Palmerston and Russell were preparing to commit the country to armed intervention, had recourse through the Prince Consort to Lord Granville (President of the Council) for information as to what was really going on in the Cabinet. Granville, after stipulating "that no one should know that I make any written communications to your Royal Highness on this subject,"[2] answered freely enough. He disclosed a serious schism in the Cabinet — Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone driving straight for intervention, and war if necessary; all the other Ministers supporting the Queen. Then began what the Prince Consort described to Clarendon as "a most painful paper warfare" between the Court and the Foreign Office; Russell submitting draft after draft despatch, and the Queen refusing to sanction them. Granville continued to write with unbounded frankness, both to the Prince Consort and to some of his colleagues behind the backs of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. The

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 353. Mr. Herbert Paul errs in attributing to Russell the refusal of the British Government to become Louis Napoleon's cat's-paw (*History of Modern England*, ii. 221).

[2] Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, i. 349.

end may be held to justify the somewhat dubious means. Without some such channel of communication, whereby the Sovereign was assured of the support of the majority of her Ministers, a rupture between Court and Cabinet could not have been averted.

On 31st August Granville believed that they had got through their troubles.

"You missed a cabinet," he wrote to the Duke of Argyll, "which was amusing and might have been of deep interest. . . . It was clear that the Queen, instead of opposing her Cabinet, had come to their rescue. . . . Johnny [Russell] very nervous. He made a confused statement. He read the Queen's minutes fast and low—would not (contrary to her request) produce his own drafts. Sidney Herbert, Newcastle, Wood, and I, who knew what was in them, questioned him closely about them, and he, I am sorry to say, equivocated immensely. . . . Gladstone backed up the majority of the Cabinet after he knew the facts, and told us that he was much surprised at the want of memory shown by Pam in his statement to him, and that he thought the Queen had been wantonly put to much unnecessary annoyance. It has ended very well. Johnny has had a lesson that the Cabinet will support the Queen in preventing him and Pam acting on important occasions without the advice of their colleagues."[1]

The matter, however, was still far from being ended either well or ill. Palmerston, headstrong as ever, Russell, intensely sensitive and nettleish, continued to argue with the Queen, endeavouring to force her hand. Peace, indeed, had been patched up between the belligerents by the treaty of Zurich (10th November 1859), awarding to the Emperor of the French his booty in the shape of Nice and Savoy, but the other conditions of the treaty were unworkable. The people of Tuscany and Modena refused to receive back their dukes; Austria, far from helping to reinstate them, prepared to resist in arms the incorporation of these dominions in the new Northern Italian kingdom; Louis Napoleon was urgent for a European congress to settle the question and to confirm him in the territory he had acquired. Palmerston and Russell were set against a congress, but were prepared to join arms with France

[1] *Life of Lord Granville*, i. 356. See also *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 366 *et passim*.

and Sardinia in opposing Austria, should she attempt to reoccupy the dukedoms.[1]

Howbeit, the majority in the Cabinet prevailed; Great Britain would join the Congress: but before the New Year it became certain that there would be no Congress. There appeared in Paris a pamphlet sanctioned, if not dictated, by the Emperor, entitled *Le Pape et le Congrès*, advocating the surrender of the Papal States by the Pope. The Emperor, invited to disclaim the views expressed in the pamphlet, expressed approval of them; whereupon Austria withdrew her agreement to the Congress. The French Foreign Minister, Walewski, resigned, and Louis Napoleon found himself at open rupture with the Catholics.

The strain between the two Ministers and their Sovereign well-nigh touched the breaking point in February, when Russell informed the Queen that he felt it was useless to communicate any more of his views to her, "as unfortunately he does not partake your Majesty's views in regard to Italy." The Queen had shown perfect forbearance throughout; nevertheless she now told Palmerston that she "must demand that respect which is due from a Minister to his Sovereign," and requested him to give Russell an opportunity of withdrawing the letter which she returned. This was done, with becoming expressions of regret.

The dilemma, so far as it involved Great Britain, was solved, as the Queen from the first had demanded it should be left to be solved, by the people of Italy themselves. The subjects of the Pope and of the King of Naples rose against their sovereigns; the revolution, which, had the nationalist impulse been less genuine, might have burnt itself out in a series of separate conflagrations, was drawn by Cavour's statecraft and Garibaldi's unquenchable spirit

[1] See Palmerston's memorandum to the Cabinet, 5th Jan. 1860. "But what is the understanding or agreement which we ought to establish with France and Sardinia? Clearly a joint determination to prevent forcible interference by any foreign Power in the affairs of Italy. This, it is said, would be a league against Austria. No doubt it would be, as far as regards the interference of Austria by force of arms in the affairs of Italy. . . . But such an engagement might lead us into war. War with whom? War with Austria. Well, suppose it did, would that war be one of great effort and expense? Clearly not." (Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 174–180.)

into a common furnace, whence emerged the new Italy, free from obscurantist thraldom to take her place among the nations of Europe. On 26th October 1860, Garibaldi laid his sword at the feet of Victor Emmanuele, saluting him as King of United Italy, and next day Russell forwarded his memorable despatch, ending with these words:—

"Her Majesty's Government can see no sufficient grounds for the severe censure with which Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia have visited the acts of the King of Sardinia. Her Majesty's Government turn their eyes rather to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their own liberties, and consolidating the work of their independence, amid the sympathies and good wishes of Europe." [1]

Prospect of French invasion, 1859–1860.

The enthusiasm of Englishmen and Scotsmen for the unification of Italy continued unabated until that great object had been attained, but their feelings towards the Emperor of the French had changed to lively distrust. Various incidents and some utterances pointed to Great Britain as the object of his next enterprise, and apprehension was not diminished by the development of a great arsenal at Cherbourg and the assembly there of a powerful fleet. Palmerston himself, who had offended his Sovereign and all the European Powers by his headlong congratulation to Louis Napoleon on the *coup d'état*, was now convinced of the malevolent intentions of the Emperor.

"Till lately," he wrote to Russell on 4th November 1859, "I had strong confidence in the fair intentions of Napoleon towards England, but of late I have begun to feel great distrust and to suspect that his formerly declared intention of avenging Waterloo has only lain dormant and has not died away. . . . The only expression we ought to give of anything like suspicion should be in the activity and the scale of our defensive arrangements. In regard to them, however, we must not be overruled by financial economy." [2]

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[1] Lord Malmesbury states that Russell's despatch was not shown to any of his colleagues, and that they were very indignant (*Memoirs of an ex-Minister*, ii. 237).

[2] Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 187, 189.

Six months before that, the War Office had issued a letter to the lords-lieutenant of counties, authorising the formation of volunteer corps. As in 1804,[1] so in 1859 did the manhood of the nation spring to arms, and before the end of the year 119,000 Rifle Volunteers had been enrolled.

The Volunteer movement, 1859–1906.

> "Form, form, riflemen form,
> Ready, be ready, to meet the storm!"

chanted the Laureate; and all men knew from what quarter to expect the storm. The immense improvement recently effected in arms of precision gave a value to irregular troops as a defensive force which they never possessed before, and which must have been taken into account by the Emperor in preparing for a descent on our shores. The danger passed, as it did in 1804; but the Volunteers were not disbanded as they were on that occasion. Through good and ill report, despite much good-humoured banter in the comic press and disparagement from professional critics, the citizen soldiers continued to give their time and money, attaining to a very high average as marksmen and persevering to a permanence quite without precedent in military history. A nation of shopkeepers? True; but here was John Leech's pencil, peerless in its way, depicting in *Punch* "some of the boys that keep the shop."[2]

If the Emperor of the French was indeed seriously nursing unfriendly designs upon England, the military alertness of "the shopkeepers" was not the only agent in giving him pause. Richard Cobden, the evangelist of Free Trade, had confidently assured his disciples that every civilised nation would follow the lead of England in abolishing import duties. Years had gone by without the slightest symptom of this assurance being fulfilled. England had been the ally of her nearest neighbour in the Crimean and Chinese wars;

The French commercial treaty, 1860.

[1] See vol. i. pp. 38, 39.

[2] In 1905, before Mr. Haldane's reorganisation of the land forces, the Volunteers numbered upwards of 200,000.

nevertheless the French tariff remained as before—prohibitive against British goods. Cobden, being thoroughly in earnest and having made his forecast in perfect good faith, bestirred himself to promote its fulfilment. He spent the winter of 1859–60 in Paris, and before going there, besought Palmerston and Russell to authorise him to treat informally with the French Minister of Commerce, M. Rouher, for a modification of trading relations between the two countries. Failing to interest either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary (had not many attempts at commercial treaties failed since 1846?), he went off to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Hawarden. Here he met with a very different reception; Gladstone welcomed the project with characteristic ardour, and sent the missionary on his way rejoicing. Two millions of terminable annuities were falling in; he authorised Cobden to use that sum as a lever in his negotiations for reciprocity.

Cobden not only obtained a ready hearing from M. Rouher; he had secret meetings with Rouher's master. The Emperor was friendly, even enthusiastic, but apprehensive of unpopularity with his protectionist people. Walewski (Foreign Minister) must have no inkling of what is in the wind. "In France we make revolutions, not reforms." The outcome was the commercial treaty with France of 1860, whereby duties on British coal and iron were lowered, and those on British goods were restricted to a maximum of 30 per cent. In return, Great Britain removed all duties on French manufactured goods, reduced the duty on light wines to one shilling a gallon, to eighteenpence and two shillings on stronger wines, and fixed the duty on French brandy at eight and fivepence instead of fifteen shillings.

On the face of it, not a brilliant bargain for British manufacturers, who were to compete in a home market with rivals entrenched behind a 30 per cent. tariff. Nevertheless, when the treaty was laid before the House of Commons on 10th February and explained by Gladstone concurrently with his budget, a motion for time to examine its provisions was rejected by 116 votes. The free-trade

fervour, as Mr. Gladstone used afterwards to say, reached its zenith in 1860;[1] the enormous influx of Californian and Australian gold had warded off the mischief to home industries predicted by protectionists; Great Britain, rich in coal and iron, still held a long lead over every other manufacturing nation, and nearly twenty years were to run before agriculture should be exposed to the withering effect of overseas competition. The country was enjoying unprecedented prosperity; any proposal to throw off shackles upon trade was sure of enthusiastic reception, to the exclusion of every alternative. All, said Gladstone, were without exception free traders, but not free traders without exception. That would have been too much to expect. Everybody rejoiced to see his neighbour stripped of protection, but clung passionately to the rags remaining on his own industry.

The paper duties, 1712–1861.

Concurrently with the French treaty the House had to consider the financial revolution involved in Mr. Gladstone's budget—"the great budget," as his biographer justly calls it.[2] Since he last laid a budget before the House, in 1853, the expenditure for which provision had to be made had risen from fifty-two millions to seventy millions. The French treaty would cost him a couple of millions, which he would recover from the lapsed annuities; repeal of the paper duties involved the loss of another million. It was on the paper tax that the fiercest fight was waged; it not only brought about one of those recurrent collisions between the two Houses of Parliament, which raise such menacing constitutional issues, but it set the two parties in the Cabinet in violent and permanent opposition to each other.

Now the burdens upon journalism were originally imposed in 1712 with deliberate intent to restrict the number and control the political tendency of newspapers. In that year the stamp duty on newspapers was fixed at one penny on each copy, and was gradually increased till in 1815 it was fixed at fourpence. There it remained until Bulwer-Lytton obtained its reduction to one penny in 1836; and

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 24.
[2] Ibid., 18–41.

in 1855 it was remitted altogether;[1] but there still remained a pretty heavy excise duty upon paper.

In accord with parliamentary practice of the day, the "tax upon knowledge," as the paper duty was termed by its enemies, had to be dealt with in a separate Bill; which Bill met with opposition from many quarters, the proprietors of high-priced journals among others. Sir Stafford Northcote, himself a pupil of Gladstone in finance, objecting to the sacrifice of a million of revenue, moved its rejection, and was defeated only by nine votes in the same House of Commons that had given Gladstone a majority of 116 for the French treaty.

Palmerston was delighted at this flout upon his alarming colleague. Just as Granville had gone behind his back in the previous year to hold secret communication with the Queen, so now Palmerston did not scruple to chuckle privily in writing to her Majesty.

"This," he wrote, "may probably encourage the House of Lords to assert itself, and Viscount Palmerston is bound in duty to say that, if they do so, they will perform a good public service. Circumstances have greatly changed since the measure was agreed to by the Cabinet, and although it would undoubtedly have been difficult for the Government to have given up the Bill, yet if Parliament were to reject it, the Government might well submit to so welcome a defeat."

Yet Palmerston owed his great popularity in the country mainly to his reputation for being perfectly "straight." In truth he stood in too great awe of his fiery Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask him to drop the Paper Duties Bill; he preferred to risk a constitutional crisis by throwing the onus on the House of Lords. The peers did his work for him, rejecting the Bill by a majority of eighty-nine, on the motion of Lord Monteagle, who, as Mr. Spring Rice, had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in a Whig Cabinet and had carried the great reform of penny postage. Palmerston, secretly grateful to the Lords, advised his colleagues to accept the situation and let the matter drop. Nobody

The Lords throw out the Paper Duties Bill, 21st May 1860.

[1] The amount paid by newspapers at the fourpenny rate in 1835 was £553,000; in 1854 the gross amount paid at the penny rate was £446,000.

outside the Cabinet seemed greatly moved except the Radical members; but Gladstone declared that "nothing would induce him to acquiesce" in his chief's advice;[1] the House of Commons must mark its displeasure with such "a gigantic innovation on the constitution" as he declared the Lords had committed by interfering with a money bill. He requested Palmerston to lay his resignation before the Queen.[2] Palmerston managed to dissuade him from taking this step, which would have broken up the Ministry, and reluctantly consented to refer the question of privilege to a select committee, presided over by Mr. Spencer Walpole. The finding of the committee was framed in three resolutions, the first of which merely affirmed that "the right of granting aids and supplies to the Crown is in the Commons alone, as an essential part of their constitution, and the limitation of all such grants as to matter, manner, measure, and time, is only in them."[3]

The second resolution distinctly recognised the power of the Lords to reject taxing bills, though they had seldom exercised it, and it was a power "justly regarded by this House with peculiar jealousy." This resolution disposed of Gladstone's contention that the action of the Lords was "a gigantic innovation on the constitution." That the power of the Lords was jealously regarded by the Commons was a very different thing from denying the existence of that power; nor was it alleged that the Lords had ever abused the power of rejection.

The third resolution was couched in language more sonorous than intelligible:—

"To guard for the future against an undue exercise of that power [of rejecting money bills] by the Lords, and to secure to the Commons their rightful control over taxation and supply, this House has in its own hands the power so to impose and remit

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 32.

[2] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 403.

[3] This was the reassertion of a claim first made in 1661, when the Lords sent down a bill for paving the streets of Westminster. The Commons declined to pass it, though they approved of its object, because it laid a charge on the people. They asked the Lords to expunge the bill from their records, in order that a similar bill should be introduced in the Commons; but the Lords declined to waive the privilege which they declared to be inherent in themselves, and no paving was done in Westminster for four years.

taxes, and to frame Bills of Supply, that the right of the Commons as to matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate."

Palmerston moved these resolutions in the House in a perfunctory manner. Gladstone's speech was an overt and daring condemnation of his chief's moderation.

Men thought "Old Pam" would never stand such insubordination; sheer mutiny, this; Gladstone would be removed from office, as Lord Anglesey had been removed in 1828 and Sir Charles Wetherell in 1829.[1] Nothing of the sort happened. Normal relations were re-established between the two Houses: Gladstone went back to his work, but in a mood very different from that in which he had undertaken it. He never forgave the House of Lords. Already, in March 1860, he had resigned membership of the Carlton;[2] henceforward he was no mere Peelite and free-trader; casting himself loose from the old standards of party, he set foot upon that gradient—incline or decline, as every reader must determine according to his principles—which was to land him as idolised leader of Radicals, framer of measures once abhorrent to him, menace to every established institution in the country except the monarchy and the House of Commons.

Effect upon Mr. Gladstone, 1860–1898.

All this happened just fifty years ago, and now, even while these lines are being penned,[3] the old battle-ground resounds with conflict upon the identical constitutional controversy—what title have the Lords to alter or reject taxation imposed by the Commons? While nobody claims for the Lords the power to impose taxes, the fact that a finance bill cannot take effect until the Lords have passed it seems to invest them with the corollary power of withholding consent. And no reply has ever been made to the contention of the Lords in their conference with the Commons in 1661, that, if the Lords were to surrender all power to deal with taxing bills, "by this way the Commons might annex things of foreign nature to Bills of money, and make another Magna Carta."

[1] See vol. i. pp. 312, 316. [2] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 29.
[3] October 1909.

CHAPTER XV

Abolition of the paper duties—The American Civil War—The *Trent* affair—Death of the Prince Consort—The cruiser *Alabama*—The Treaty of Washington—The Geneva arbitration—The Lancashire cotton famine—Forbearance of the Conservative Opposition—Lull in party controversy—Marriage of the Prince of Wales—The Danish imbroglio—The London Conference.

THE conflict in the Cabinet grew ever hotter. It nearly reached catastrophe when Gladstone submitted to his colleagues his budget for 1861. In the preceding session, Palmerston, his suspicion of the Emperor of the French being thoroughly aroused, had overborne Gladstone's schemes of retrenchment by insisting upon a loan of ten millions for fortification. "Better to lose Mr. Gladstone," he wrote to the Queen, "than to run the risk of losing Portsmouth or Plymouth." With the New Year the financial outlook became brighter; the Chinese war had been brought to an earlier close than was expected, and the prospect of a surplus decided the Chancellor of the Exchequer to renew his proposal to repeal the paper tax, trusting to mollify opposition by taking a penny off the tenpenny income-tax. For the first time, all the financial provision for the year was comprised in a single measure, whereby it was calculated that the Lords would be deprived of power to throw out any particular tax without creating a financial deadlock; "for the first and only time," as Gladstone wrote reminiscently in the last year of his life, Palmerston lost his temper.[1] He quickly recovered his usual jaunty good-humour, but declined, much to Gladstone's disgust, to make the paper duty a Cabinet question. When the finance bill came before the Commons in committee, Mr. Horsfall moved to reduce the duty on tea from 1s. 5d. a pound to 1s. instead of remitting the paper duty. He was beaten by

Abolition of the paper duties, 1861.

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 39.

only eighteen votes. The direct motion for remitting the paper duty was carried by only fifteen votes. What would the Lords do? Lord Granville, in moving the second reading, assumed that they must either pass or reject the whole Bill, and that it was not in their power to amend it. Lord Derby refused assent to this doctrine, contending that although the Lords had no power to impose taxation, they enjoyed a perfect right to alter a money bill; but he considered it would be unwise for either House to exercise its utmost privilege. In accordance with this advice the Bill passed, *nemine contradicente.*

The election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States was the signal for the secession of the Southern States and the outbreak of civil war on a vast scale early in 1861. The ostensible grievance of the Southerners—Confederates, as they called themselves in distinction from the Federals of the North—consisted in certain restrictions imposed upon their trade by the Washington Government; but the real cause that brought them out was the interference which they apprehended with the slave system. So violent an upheaval amid a people of British speech and descent could not but create critical issues at the headquarters of the English-speaking race. The question presented itself at the outset, Should Queen Victoria's Government recognise the Confederates as belligerents, or were they to be regarded merely as rebels against a friendly Power? The problem was solved by the act of the Federal Government when it proclaimed a blockade of all the Confederate ports. In the opinion of the British law officers, no government could *blockade* its own ports; it could *close* them, but a blockade implies belligerency, not insurrection. Acting on this advice, Russell announced on 8th May that the Government recognised the Southern States as belligerents, and this was followed on the 13th by the Queen's proclamation of neutrality, with the concomitant prohibition against British subjects taking service with either combatant. Lincoln's Cabinet immediately complained of this as an unfriendly act. No State in the Union, they maintained, had a constitutional right to

The American Civil War, 1861–1865.

secede; it could only rebel; the British Government had unduly favoured the rebels by recognition and by prohibiting the Queen's subjects from lending any aid to the United States Government. Russell rejoined that, so far from favouring the Confederates by recognising them as belligerents, the Queen's Government had taken the only course enabling them to respect the Federal blockade and to restrain British traders from breaking it.

Howbeit, notwithstanding that there had been no intention to offer official encouragement to the Confederates, popular sympathy in Great Britain was overwhelmingly with their cause from the first.[1] Friendship between the governments and people of the two countries had never been fervent; tepid and platonic, rather. British statesmen might contemplate with equanimity a break-up in the powerful and growing federation of States, destined sooner or later, as many Americans cherished the belief, to efface the frontier of the Dominion of Canada.[2] The British public, whose enthusiasm for the cause of Italian liberation had been fanned by the eloquence of their rulers, was not careful to weigh nicely the rights of the quarrel. On the face of it, if revolution in Italy was commendable, surely secession in North America was not to be condemned. Our people, therefore, warmly espoused what appeared to be the weaker and more chivalrous cause. Applause, freely accorded in the English press, to the initial successes of the Confederate army, created intense and dangerous irritation in the Washington Cabinet; and Palmerston made matters worse when, in referring publicly to the defeat of the Federal troops at Bull's Run on 21st July, he indulged in imprudent sarcasm about their "unfortunate rapid movements."

[1] There is no foundation for Mr. Herbert Paul's contention that this feeling prevailed only among the upper and middle classes (*Modern England*, ii. 300). The Duke of Argyll and Lord Stanley warmly supported the Federal Government; while Bright, Forster, and Cobden, typical middle-class leaders, "were staunch friends of the Union." Except in Lancashire and Yorkshire, where the stoppage of cotton imports affected personal interests, enthusiasm for the Confederates prevailed in all classes of society.

[2] "Lord Palmerston desired the severance as a diminution of a dangerous power, but prudently held his tongue" (Mr. Gladstone in 1896: Morley's *Life*, ii. 82).

Matters continued in this hazardous state of tension until the autumn, when there befell an event which seemed to force England irresistibly into the war. Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, appointed two envoys, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, to plead for recognition of Southern independence and nationality respectively at the Courts of St. James's and of the Tuileries, Great Britain and France being the only European Governments that had recognised the belligerency of the seceding States. These two gentlemen, having run the blockade of Charleston by night, embarked at Havana in the British mail steamer *Trent*. The *San Jacinto*, a Federal sloop-of-war, was cruising in search of the Confederate privateer *Sumter*; her commander, Captain Wilkes, being apprised of the movements of the envoys, ran across the *Trent* in the Bahama Channel, fired a couple of shot across her bows, boarded her, and made prisoners of Messrs. Mason and Slidell.

The *Trent* affair, Nov. 1861.

It may be assumed that this was a breach of international law;[1] anyhow, it was a violation of that immunity which the United States had always claimed for themselves as neutrals, the disregard of which claim had caused the war of 1812.

When the news reached England it caused tremendous excitement. The flag had been insulted; instant reparation must be demanded. Russell drafted a vigorous despatch to the Federal Government; at the same time directing Lord Lyons, British Ambassador at Washington, to require the release of the Confederate envoys, and to come away if his request were not fulfilled within seven days. Simultaneously, 8000 troops were embarked to be ready for

[1] Not so certainly as most English writers have maintained. Lord Palmerston reported to the Queen the result of a conference on the subject with the Lord Chancellor, Dr. Lushington, the three law officers, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and Sir George Grey. "The result of their deliberation was that, according to the Law of Nations . . . the Northern Union, being a belligerent, is entitled by its ships of war to stop and search any neutral merchantman, and the West India Packet is such; to search her if there is reasonable suspicion that she is carrying the enemy's despatches, and, if such are found on board, to take her to a port of the belligerent, and there to proceed against her for condemnation." (*Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 466.)

emergency on the Canadian frontier, and preparation was made for immediate hostilities. In all probability the country was only saved from a fratricidal war by the prudent counsel of the Prince Consort. When Russell's draft was submitted to the Queen on 30th November, the Prince, already greatly weakened and suffering from mortal illness, prepared the last memorandum on State affairs which came from his hand. He suggested that the peremptory tone of the draft should be greatly softened, and that her Majesty's Government should explicitly acquit the United States Government of any intention of wanton insult to the British flag.[1] The Cabinet, meeting on the same day, concurred in the Queen's suggestion; Russell's despatch was modified accordingly, and a private letter was sent to Lord Lyons, cancelling the instructions about withdrawal.

Lincoln summoned his Cabinet to consider the despatch and the demand for reparation. It was Christmas Day; "Peace and goodwill towards men," sang the choirs; but how were these blessings to be assured in the face of two angry nations? For feeling ran as high on one side of the Atlantic as the other. Captain Wilkes had been commended for his prompt action by the Secretary to the Navy; the Washington House of Representatives had passed a vote of thanks to him; he had been fêted wherever he went. Lincoln, personally anxious to keep on good terms with England and recognising the weakness of the American case, would willingly have released the prisoners at once, but he had misgivings about the temper of Congress and his people. His dilemma was much lightened by the tactful serenity of Lord Lyons, who sought a private interview with Mr. Secretary Seward, and undertook to make everything as easy as possible for the American Cabinet. It is not agreeable to speculate upon what might have been the outcome if Lord John Russell had been standing in Lord Lyons's shoes. "Any display of hauteur or impatience on the part of the British Government must have been met by defiance, so bitter was the hatred of "Britishers" in the Northern States at this time. But the

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, iii. 470.

case of England had been committed to safe hands. The friendly courtesy of Lord Lyons met with a generous response. Seward took with him to the Christmas Cabinet the British Ambassador's assurance that no apology would be required if the Federal Government could explain that Captain Wilkes had acted without their direct instructions. This was easily done; the liberation of the prisoners was ordered forthwith, and the crisis was over.

Over, also, was the life-work of him to whom the nation primarily owed the pacific solution of a dangerous dilemma. On 30th November, when the Prince Consort was purging the Foreign Secretary's despatch of superfluous saltpetre, he was already in the grip of what developed into severe gastric fever. Congestion of the lungs followed, and at midnight on Saturday, 14th December, the great bell of St. Paul's tolled announcement to the people of London that their monarch's Consort was no more. It is well understood by this time how loyally and tactfully he had filled his difficult station. He died only in his forty-third year, the very prime of experienced manhood; many of those who survived him reflected with something akin to remorse upon the coldness and suspicion which he had to encounter in the early years of his married life. These unfriendly feelings had been dispelled long since. Although, as was widely known, the Prince was as diligent and vigilant in public affairs as any Minister of the Crown, yet he never put himself forward in a manner to rouse jealousy in a self-governing people. It cannot be claimed for him that he ever earned much popularity with the masses. As a cynical French writer has observed, *La vertu est une triste chose; elle ne laisse point de souvenirs.* Our second Charles was far more popular than his father. There is a certain monotony in faultless conduct, like that of perpetual serene weather, that wearies less perfect natures. It was in accord with all experience of human nature in the mass that "Albert the Good" incurred a measure of that impatience which proved fatal to Aristides the Just. However, no sooner had the nation lost its Prince than it began to realise the full merit of his great career—to be grateful for his energy in promoting every scheme of

Death of the Prince Consort, 14th Dec. 1861.

social or intellectual advancement, and in stimulating commercial and industrial enterprise. But that which, more than anything else, has endeared the memories both of Queen and Consort is the perfect ideal which they embodied of home life, the like whereof might be sought for in vain in the annals of the British Court.

The writing-tables of the Queen and the Prince used to stand side by side; much of her Majesty's correspondence with Ministers is in the Prince's handwriting. When Palmerston announced to the Queen, on 9th January 1862, the settlement of the *Trent* dispute, she replied:—

"Lord Palmerston cannot but look on this peaceful issue of the American quarrel as greatly owing to her beloved Prince, who wrote the observations on the draft to Lord Lyons, in which Lord Palmerston so entirely concurred. It was the last thing he ever wrote."

In the settlement of the *Trent* affair the Government had by no means reached the end of complications arising out of the conflict in North America. Private dockyards in Great Britain were turning out vessels as fast as they could be built to sell to the Confederate Government. One of these cruisers, the *Alabama*, built in Messrs. Laird's yard in the Mersey, became the scourge of Federal commerce, capturing between sixty and seventy merchantmen in two years. At last she was sunk on 19th June 1864 by the Federal ship *Kearsage*, which lay in wait for her outside Cherbourg, where she had put in for repair; but her fame did not perish with her. The exploits of this formidable cruiser brought about an important reform in international law.

The cruiser *Alabama*, 1862–64.

The plain and unpalatable truth is that the *Alabama* was, to all intent and purpose, an English pirate. Built and armed in England, most of her crew and all her gunners were British, some of them actually drawing pay as men of the Royal Naval Reserve. She stalked her prey with British colours at the peak, hauling them down when that prey was under her guns; she was constantly in British waters, and never in a Confederate port. On 23rd June 1862, when she was being built at Birkenhead, the

American ambassador, Mr. Adams, appealed to Lord Russell[1] to have her detained under the Foreign Enlistment Act. Russell took no action; the Confederates, it was believed, were sure to win in the end; better not offend them. A month later, Adams renewed his appeal, fortified by the legal opinion of Mr. Collier,[2] counsel to the British Admiralty. Russell, instead of acting on his own initiative, as undoubtedly he ought to have done, merely passed on the letter and enclosure to the law officers. By an ill chance, Sir John Harding, the Queen's Advocate,[3] unknown to Russell, had become insane. By the time the papers had been considered by the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General, and after they had expressed concurrence with Collier's opinion that the *Alabama* should be detained, it was too late; she had escaped to sea, and was taking her armament on board from lighters.

Later on in 1863, when two ironclad rams built in the Mersey were on the point of being taken out for the Confederate service, Adams demanded that they should be detained, observing in his letter to the Foreign Secretary that "it would be superfluous for me to point out to your lordship that *this is war*." Adams was right. Great Britain appeared to have dropped all but the pretence of neutrality, the prevailing enthusiasm for the Confederates being strengthened by a growing conviction that the Union was broken up for good and all. Speaking at a Liberal banquet in Newcastle on 7th October 1862, Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had uttered sentiments which, had not all the Federal resources been drained to the last man and gun, must have been met by President Lincoln with an ultimatum.[4]

[1] Lord John had been created Earl Russell in 1861.

[2] Created Lord Monkswell in 1885; d. 1886.

[3] At that time the Queen's Advocate ranked senior to the Attorney-General.

[4] "We know quite well," said Mr. Gladstone, "that the people of the Northern States have not yet drunk of the cup—they are still trying to hold it far from their lips—which all the rest of the world see they nevertheless must drink of. We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either—they have made a nation."

However, the Government had the grace to detain the rams in question, buying them up for the Queen's service for £220,000. President Lincoln, Earl Russell, and Lord Palmerston had all passed away before the *Alabama* controversy was disposed of. By anticipation, it may here be followed to its tardy close. Before that was reached the Americans had laid down their arms and elected General Grant President of the States once more United, Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister of England.

Neither Palmerston nor Russell would entertain any question of responsibility or reparation for the acts of the *Alabama* and other cruisers. It is not gratifying to reflect in what degree their uncompromising attitude was due to the exhaustion which precluded the United States Government from founding a *casus belli* on the refusal to listen to their claims. At all events, in 1866, Lord Derby being Prime Minister, and his son, Lord Stanley, Foreign Secretary, it was agreed to refer the claims to arbitration. But so many and so extravagant were the claims put forward, many of them on behalf of private individuals and arising out of events long anterior to the civil war, that the mere preliminaries could not be adjusted till Gladstone was once more in office in 1871. Commissioners were then chosen by each nation to meet at Washington for the discussion of the American claims for compensation, and certain British counter-claims arising out of Fenian raids upon Canadian territory. The British High Commissioners were Lord de Grey,[1] Sir Stafford Northcote,[2] Professor Montague Bernard,[3] Sir Edward Thornton, British Ambassador at Washington, and Sir John Macdonald, Canadian Prime Minister. After holding thirty-seven sittings, the Commissioners agreed upon the terms of the Treaty of Washington, whereof the first article set the teeth of the British public cruelly on edge, for it contained an apology—dignified, but explicit—offered by her Majesty's Govern-

The Treaty of Washington, 1871.

[1] Created Marquess of Ripon in 1871; d. 1909.

[2] Created Earl of Iddesleigh in 1885; d. 1887. Lord Derby, on being invited to act on the Commission, declined, saying that in dealing with the Americans, firmness, not conciliation, was what was wanted.

[3] Chichele Professor at Oxford; d. 1882.

ment "for the escape, under whatever circumstances, of the *Alabama* and other vessels from British ports, and for the depredations committed by these vessels." When, it was passionately asked, had England apologised to any other Power? Never would she have done so now had "Old Pam" been still at the head of affairs!

The American Senate rejected a motion by Mr. Sumner hostile to the treaty by fifty votes to twelve. Some satisfaction here, at least; for Sumner, who had but lately been removed from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Relations, was violently anti-British, and wished to insist upon an apology from the Queen's Government for having recognised the Confederates as belligerents.

A fresh difficulty confronted Mr. Gladstone in his Cabinet when the terms of the treaty came before it for consideration. It was provided that Queen Victoria, the President of the United States, the King of Italy, the President of the Swiss Confederation, and the Emperor of Brazil should each nominate an arbitrator; but such was the haziness of international maritime law that the Washington Commissioners had deemed it necessary to formulate a code of rules for the guidance of the arbitrators. Upon the merit of these rules it would be futile for a layman to express opinion, seeing that high legal authorities have never been able to agree thereon; the broad objection to them—one upon which the Cabinet nearly foundered—was that, to be of any use for guiding the arbitrators, they had to be treated as retro-active, creating conditions which did not exist when the alleged breaches of neutrality had been committed.

The majority of the Cabinet strongly objected to these *ex post facto* regulations as vitiating the whole process of arbitration. Only Granville, Argyll, and Forster were earnestly urgent that, to allay the irritation which had so long prevailed, the conditions should be accepted. Gladstone, than whom no man more ardently sought external peace, only brought himself "to agree with reluctance";[1] and, having done so, managed with great

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 403.

difficulty to carry the recalcitrant majority of the Cabinet with him.

The arbitrators assembled at Geneva on 15th December, and having elected the Italian, Count Sclopis, their President, adjourned for six months to enable the agents of both nations to prepare their cases. The British arbitrator was Lord Chief-Justice Cockburn,[1] having with him as leading counsel Sir Roundell Palmer.[2] The United States were represented by Mr. Adams, formerly American Minister in London.

The Geneva arbitration, 15th Dec. 1871–Sept. 1872.

Long before the date appointed for the reassembly of the arbitrators, the American claims had been made public, whereof the nature and extent were so preposterous that Gladstone declared in the House of Commons, "We must be insane to accede to demands which no nation with a spark of honour or spirit left could submit to, even at the point of death."

For direct damage done by the *Alabama* and other cruisers the American claim was £9,500,000; under the head of indirect claims were submitted loss of profit on cargoes, increased insurance premiums, and the whole cost of the civil war after the battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, with which, it was groundlessly alleged, the land campaigns of the Confederates had been brought to an end. These indirect claims mounted up to a total of about 2,000,000,000 dollars (£400,000,000)—about half the National Debt! After maintaining before the House of Commons that they were excluded from arbitration by the terms of the treaty, Gladstone exclaimed: "That is the true and unambiguous meaning of the words, and therefore the only meaning admissible, whether tried by grammar, by reason, by policy, or by any other standard."

At no period of this controversy was the outlook so threatening; iron and lead, apparently, the only medium of argument with President Grant's Government. Not since the Napoleonic wars was the whole British nation so resolutely and unanimously indignant. When the arbi-

[1] D. 1880.

[2] Created Lord Selborne in 1872 on appointment as Lord Chancellor, advanced to an earldom in 1882; d. 1895.

trators met at Geneva on 15th June 1872, the British agent declined to submit his case, asking for a further adjournment of eight months to allow the American Government to bring their claim within the scope prescribed for arbitration. This was tantamount to Great Britain declining arbitration altogether; a calamity from which the world was saved by the courage and reasonable spirit of the American representative, Mr. Adams, who took upon himself to persuade his colleagues to rule out the indirect claims as being beyond the terms of their reference, and succeeded in doing so. The road was now clear for the arbitrators, who delivered their award in September. They were unanimous only on one point, namely, the responsibility of Great Britain for the depredations of the *Alabama*. A majority found her liable for the acts of the other cruisers, and, by four voices to one, the American Government were awarded compensation to the extent of 15,500,000 dollars in gold (£3,250,000) in full of all demands, interest included.

It was not to be expected that this result should be received with satisfaction in England. A proud nation had been caught tripping; John Bull had been made to knuckle down to Brother Jonathan; the feeling that Great Britain had been unfairly dealt with was strengthened by the arbitrators taking the unusual course of publishing the reasons for their several judgments. Sir Alexander Cockburn's statement filled 250 folio pages of the London *Gazette*, and the arguments of this most able lawyer were conclusive to most impartial minds that substantial injustice had been done to England. Cockburn held that the award should have been limited to the actual amount of the damage done by the *Alabama*. The feeling between the people of the United States and Great Britain remained as sore, perhaps, as if the dispute had been fought out in the old brutal fashion, but to Ministers the pacific settlement of a long-standing and dangerous controversy was too great a relief from anxiety to allow them to grudge the price exacted.

The award of the Geneva arbitrators was but a moiety of the loss sustained by Great Britain as a consequence of

the American civil war. When that war broke out there was no British industry prospering so vigorously as the cotton manufacture, profits on capital invested being commonly reckoned at from 30 to 40 per cent. It was not till towards the end of 1861 that the raw imports from America began to fall off, not only because of the Federal blockade of the Southern ports—which was at no time very effective—but because the Confederate Government, knowing that the cotton industry furnished employment for more than half a million operatives in northern England, purposely stinted the export trade, thinking thereby to coerce the Queen's Government into recognising their independence, as it had already recognised their belligerency. The effect upon Lancashire was nothing short of calamitous. In January 1862 the number of persons receiving relief from the rates had increased 70 per cent. as compared with the corresponding period in 1861. Relief committees, financed by voluntary subscriptions amounting, by the end of 1862, to more than three-quarters of a million sterling, were formed to save the people from starving without turning them wholesale into paupers. In November 1862 these committees dealt with 200,084 persons, which, added to 258,357 obtaining relief from the rates, made a total of 458,441, and even this huge number had been augmented by 30,000 before the end of the year.[1] Despite the intense suffering and anxiety revealed in these figures, the workers endured their trials with the most praiseworthy patience. There was complete absence of those violent disturbances of civil order which are so often the outcome of acute and widespread distress.

The Lancashire cotton famine, 1862–63.

In another and very different sphere there was manifest a becoming spirit of forbearance. The attitude of the Conservative Opposition in Parliament received frequent acknowledgment from Ministers for its considerate restraint.

Forbearance of the Conservative Opposition, 1862–64.

"Mr. Disraeli," wrote Gladstone to the Queen on 3rd June 1872, "behaved with the caution and moderation which have generally marked his conduct with regard to the Washington Treaty. . . . On the whole, the House of Commons showed the

[1] *The Facts of the Cotton Famine*, by J. Walls.

same dignified self-command for which it has been remarkable during the whole period since the opening of the session with reference to this question; although the more inflammatory expressions which fell from a few members were warmly cheered by a portion, and a portion only, of the Opposition."

All as it ought to be, but often is not, when a Tory Government is in office. There is no instance within the century of Conservatives seeking to make party capital out of difficulties with foreign Powers, as the Radicals and a section of the Whigs persistently did during the struggle with Napoleon.

Whether Disraeli's moderation be attributed to patriotism or prudence—the reader will decide according to his prepossession and discernment—this much is certain, that at no period within the century has there prevailed such a lull in party polemics as endured for five years after the Prince Consort's death. That event, important as it undoubtedly was, cannot be reckoned even a contributory cause of the tranquillity; for, albeit the Prince's influence had been powerful and unceasing, materially affecting the relations of the monarch with her Ministers, and, through them, the relations with foreign Powers, his concern with domestic politics did not much exceed the advancement of philanthropic and educational schemes. The sedative influence was the popularity of Lord Palmerston with the public, and the confidence he had secured from both the great parties in the State. Impatient Radicals, indeed, cursed the easy-going Minister, but they could not withhold homage from the imperturbable Man. Restless Russell had been removed to the Lords, and, greatly to his leader's relief, had quietly dismounted from his hobby of reform and applied himself to dictating innumerable despatches in the Foreign Office. Beside Palmerston sat Gladstone, concentrating his unrivalled powers upon a succession of adroit budgets, nobody suspecting the latent fire which, ere it should be quenched, was to consume so many venerable landmarks. Disraeli sat opposite, never so dangerous as when outwardly somnolent; but Disraeli's hour was not yet come. The bulk of the Conservatives dreaded nothing so much as turning out

Lull in party controversy, 1861–65.

"Old Pam," having little confidence as yet in their own chief. As for the Irish members, their support of the Government had been cooled, and their attendance at the House diminished, from resentment at the sympathy shown to Italian liberationists.

It was during this strange *trêve de Dieu* that, on 10th March 1863, the Prince of Wales, being in his twenty-second year, married the Princess Alexandra, eldest daughter of the heir-presumptive to the throne of Denmark—"Sea-king's daughter from over the sea." Announcement of the betrothal was received by the British public with acquiescence. Murmurs there were that the heir of England might have sought a loftier alliance; but no sooner did the Princess appear in London than her exceeding beauty and charm won all hearts, and critics were struck dumb. London hastened to huddle away all traces of the dingy English winter under masses of the lively Danish white and scarlet, and everywhere the Dannebrog—national ensign of Denmark—floated side by side with the Union flag in the keen wind and clear sunshine of March. Only one thing marred the pictorial effect of the various gatherings and Court functions celebrating the marriage. It was the height of the crinoline craze—surely the most grotesque and unlovely outcome of milliner's tyranny. One has but to study the pictorial art of the period to be filled with amazement how nineteenth-century fathers, husbands, and lovers could submit to such a ballooning disguise of feminine grace and form.

Marriage of the Prince of Wales, 10th March 1863.

Events on the Continent took a turn a few months later which gave to this marriage an appearance of political significance which, in reality, it did not possess. In an older time, no doubt, the espousal of the heir of England to a daughter of Denmark would have implied, if it did not ensure, an alliance, offensive and defensive, between the two governments; but now it is not princes, but peoples, or at least parliaments, that decree peace or declare war, and it was this very fact that made these wedding-bells come so perilously near sounding the call to arms. Englishmen, enamoured of their new and lovely Princess, were chival-

rously eager to champion the cause of her little country, forgetting that it was only the adopted country of her sire.

It requires a little patience to understand the complicated situation created by the death of Frederick VII. of Denmark on 15th November 1863. His predecessors on the throne had reigned, more or less precariously, over the Elbe Duchies—Sleswick, Holstein, and Lauenberg—since the year 1474. But whereas the Salic law prevailed in the Duchies, and not in Denmark, the failure of the Danish royal male line would have severed the Duchies from the kingdom, just as the kingdom of Hanover became detached from the British crown on the death of William IV. To avoid this severance, the Great Powers definitely annexed the Duchies to the kingdom of Denmark by the treaty of London in 1852, and settled the succession to the Danish throne upon Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glucksburg, father of our Princess of Wales, the Duke of Augustenburg surrendering for a stipulated sum his claim as heir to the Duchies in the male line.

The Danish imbroglio, 1863-64.

Thus presciently did Courts and Cabinets insure against fire which, once kindled in that inflammable quarter, might spread no man knew whither. But they left two agencies out of account in their calculations, to wit, first, the feelings of the people of the Duchies, who, being in the proportion of eight Germans to every Dane, detested the Danish connection and ardently desired incorporation in the German Confederation; second, the supreme contempt in which the Prussian Minister von Bismarck held the concert of Europe and treaty obligations when they clashed with his deep-rooted purpose of acquiring a naval base. So, when the childless Frederick of Denmark died on 15th November 1863, the Duke of Augustenberg, who had quietly pocketed the price of his heirship in 1852, claimed the succession to the Duchies, was received with acclamation by the people of Holstein, and, supported by Prussian and Austrian troops (for Bismarck had managed to implicate Austria in the transaction), was proclaimed Hereditary Prince. Out flew innumerable despatches from Lord Russell—advice to Copenhagen—remonstrance with Berlin

and Vienna. Nobody paid much attention to these; but while the plot was thickening, Palmerston spoke out bravely in the House of Commons on 23rd July, declaring that if any attempt were made to infringe the territorial rights of the Danish crown, those who made such an attempt would find that "it was not with Denmark alone they would have to contend." This meant "Hands off!" or nothing; nor would Palmerston have flinched from performance; but he had his colleagues to reckon with; no ductile ciphers, as he would have preferred, but men of views. Only Russell was for fulfilling the given pledge by force of arms. The others would not hear of Britain going to war single-handed—20,000 British troops flung in the face of 200,000 or 300,000 Prussians and Austrians. If Prussia and Austria were bent on violating the treaty of 1852, were there not other signatories—France and Russia? The utmost to which Palmerston, and that with difficulty, could persuade his Cabinet to consent was an invitation to France to join in defending the Duchies.

The invitation found Louis Napoleon in bad humour. Russell had just declined his proposal for a European congress to revise the Vienna treaties of 1814 and 1815 ("one of the traps laid by Napoleon for the silly birds he was trying to lure into his decoy"[1]). France, said he, had no special interest in the integrity of Denmark; but she would have to bear the bulk of the fighting, and, after all (having no apprehension about the future of Alsace-Lorraine), the people of the Duchies were more German than Danish.

The London Conference, April–June 1864.

Early in March 1864, Russell was able to announce that he had persuaded the neutral Powers to agree to a conference on the Danish affair. By that time the Danes had been forced to evacuate Holstein and Schleswig, and a month later Prussian troops entered Jutland. The conference met in London on 25th April, and an armistice was arranged till the end of June. The deliberations came to nothing. Although the British press and public continued passionately pro-Danish, it had become pretty widely known that the Cabinet would not go to war, notwithstanding that Palmerston

[1] Palmerston to Russell, 2nd Dec. 1863.

roundly told the Austrian ambassador that if an Austrian squadron was sent to the Baltic it would be followed by a British one, "with such orders for acting as the case might require." But this, as he expressed it to Russell, was but "a notch off his own bat"; the Cabinet was against him, and so was the widowed Queen. Bismarck, relieved from serious apprehension from this quarter, coolly repudiated the treaty of London on the preposterous pretext that war between the parties to a treaty abrogated all obligations imposed by such treaty. The brutal frankness of this doctrine of brigandage, propounded by the author of the war, bereft the conference of much prospect of a settlement, and it was dissolved on 22nd June without effecting anything.

What should England do? She had encouraged little Denmark to give battle to two continental Goliaths—was she now to leave her in the lurch? Low did Palmerston hold his good grey head on 25th June while his colleagues were arriving at the final decision. When he raised it, it was to say, "I think the Cabinet is against war," and so the die was cast.[1] Palmerston did not resign; he put on a bold front under Disraeli's well-merited motion of censure, upon which the Government escaped defeat by only eighteen votes. They were saved by two forces—Gladstone's earnest eloquence and the votes of Cobden and the Manchester party, who reckoned hardly any price too high to pay for non-intervention and peace. Disraeli stopped short of demanding that Great Britain should go to war on behalf of Denmark.

"It is not for us—it is not for any man in this House—to indicate to Ministers what should be the foreign policy of this country. The most we can do is to tell the noble lord what is not our policy. We will not threaten, and then refuse to act. We will not lead on our allies with expectations which we do not intend to fulfil. And, sir, if it ever be the lot of myself, and those with whom I act, to carry on the important negotiations of this country, I trust we shall not, at least, carry them on in such a manner as that it will be our duty to come to Parliament and announce that we have no ally, and then to declare that England can never act alone. Sir, these are words that ought never to

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 117.

have escaped the lips of any British Minister. . . . I remember that there was a time, when England had not a tithe of our resources, when, inspired by a patriotic cause, she triumphantly encountered a world in arms. . . . But, sir, I for one will never consent to go to war to extricate Ministers from the consequences of their own indiscretion."

The whole episode is not one upon which Britons can ponder without prickings of conscience. England had played a sorry part. Russell's would-be tutelage of Denmark and Palmerston's "bluff"—honest bluff, but bluff none the less—had landed her in a position whence she could only extricate herself by the sword. Yet it would have been madness to plunge the country into war to maintain a treaty for which all the other signatories disclaimed responsibility. The majority of the Cabinet were in the right; upon the shoulders of Palmerston and Russell must be left the blame for creating a situation whence the only issue was not an honourable one.

CHAPTER XVI

Mr. Gladstone draws to the Radicals—Death of Lord Palmerston—Lord Russell's Second Administration—The Russell-Gladstone Reform Bill—Robert Lowe (Viscount Sherbrooke)—The Russell Cabinet resigns—Commercial crisis and bank panic—Riot in Hyde Park—The Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill—Secession of three Secretaries of State—Abolition of the compound householder—Invention and development of electric telegraphy—Laying the Atlantic cable—Federation of British North America—The Fenian Brotherhood—Fenian raid upon Canada—Fenian plots and outrages in England and Ireland—War with Abyssinia.

THE Sixth Parliament of Queen Victoria was dissolved on 6th July 1865, having reached the unusual age of six years and thirty-six days. The result of the general election was a compliment to the veteran Prime Minister, although the shadow of coming events lay across the gain of five-and-twenty seats to the Liberals, for most of those seats were captured by Radicals. The omens were accurately read by one who was ever peculiarly sensitive to changes in the political atmosphere. Mr. Gladstone, though he had ceased to be a member of the Carlton Club, had been reckoned up to this time a Liberal-Conservative.

Mr. Gladstone draws to the Radicals, 1865.

"In all good humour," he wrote to Palmerston in 1862, "I prefer not being classed with Mr. Bright, or even Mr. Cobden; first, because I do not know their opinions with any precision; and secondly, because, as far as I do know or grasp them, they seem to contemplate fundamental changes in taxation which I disapprove in principle, and believe also to be unattainable in practice, and reductions of establishment and expenditure for which I am not prepared to be responsible."[1]

The events of the two years which had passed since this disavowal of Radicalism was penned had profoundly affected the whole bent of Gladstone's powerful intellect. Like the great majority of his countrymen, he had felt and expressed conviction that the inherent defects of a

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 49.

government constituted like that of the United States must inevitably fail under the stress of civil war. He was amazed and converted by a result so different: and he announced his conversion with a suddenness which startled Palmerston into protest,[1] and caused painful searching of Liberal hearts. The announcement was made in a House languidly listening to a debate on a private member's Bill for lowering the franchise:—

"I call upon the adversary to show cause, and I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution."

The sensation was immediate and intense. Here was the most eloquent man in the Commons, marked out for its leader in a day that could not be distant, declaring his faith in manhood suffrage. There was more than this. The question of the Irish Church establishment was brought before the House in February 1865 on an adverse motion by Mr. Dillwyn. "I am not loyal to it as an establishment," wrote Gladstone to Robert Phillimore; "I could not renew the votes and speeches of thirty years back." It came to Palmerston's ears that Gladstone intended to support Dillwyn's motion as an individual, not as a Minister. Impossible! cried Palmerston; you cannot act so with ordinary loyalty to your colleagues. Nevertheless he did so act, pronouncing the Irish Church a failure, ministering to no more than an eighth part of the people of Ireland; but the Cabinet could not afford to shed a Chancellor of the Exchequer who was able to gratify such a wide range of interests as he did by devoting his surplus of four millions to reducing the tea duty from a shilling to sixpence and the income-tax from sixpence to fourpence. A master of finance is a stronger pillar to a cabinet than even a master of trenchant speech. Gladstone was supreme in both these rare attainments; but he had forfeited the allegiance of Oxford University, which returned Mr. Gathorne-Hardy[2] over his head by 180 votes.

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 128.

[2] Created Viscount Cranbrook in 1878 and Earl of Cranbrook in 1892.

"There have been two great deaths or transmigrations of spirit in my political existence," he wrote to the Bishop of Oxford after his defeat. "One very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party; the other, very short and sharp, the breaking of the tie with Oxford. There will probably be a third, and no more."[1]

Many, perhaps most, students of English politics will have traced in Gladstone's subsequent career many later transmigrations. From this one—the rupture with Oxford—may be recognised his outset as a thoroughgoing opportunist. Palmerston, at all events, was under no illusion about the risk of turning Gladstone loose upon the country. "He is a dangerous man," said he to Lord Shaftesbury; "keep him at Oxford, and he is partially muzzled; but send him elsewhere, and he will run wild." Somebody repeated this to Gladstone, who, after his defeat at Oxford, opened a fresh campaign in South Lancashire by saying at a meeting of electors in the Manchester Free Trade Hall: "At last, my friends, I have come amongst you. . . . I am come amongst you unmuzzled!"

Taken as a whole, the verdict of the constituencies in 1865 was an emphatic expression of confidence in Palmerston. Complex confidence, indeed; Radicals voted for him as the only possible leader of the Liberal party, though they hated his foreign policy and chafed under his discouragement of reform. Liberals supported him because he exactly represented moderate liberalism; and Mr. W. H. Smith, who, as a Liberal-Conservative, had been beaten in a contest for Westminster by John Stuart Mill, expressed the general feeling among Conservatives when he wrote to the chief whip of that party: "I believe in Lord Palmerston, and look forward ultimately to a fusion of the moderate men following Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston into a strong Liberal-Conservative party."

But fate decreed that Palmerston was not to take command of the forces, new and old, that had mustered under his banner. He died on 18th October 1865, within two days of completing his eighty-first year, having sat in the House of Commons for fifty-eight consecutive years. The country

Death of Lord Palmerston, 18th Oct. 1865.

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 149.

was more profoundly moved than it had been by any similar event since the death of Wellington. Outward and ceremonial mourning, of course, had been far more universal for the Prince Consort; for it is required of a public character that he shall play a leading part beyond the span of a single generation before he gathers to himself, surely but insensibly, personal attachment affecting thousands who may never have set eyes on him nor heard his voice. The death of one who had held office throughout the Peninsular and Waterloo campaigns, the last surviving colleague of Castlereagh and Canning, vigorous and jocund to the end, was as the removal of an ancient landmark. On the night after Palmerston drew his last breath there was an extraordinary display of aurora borealis. In so great veneration and affection was the dead Minister held, that some there were who brought to mind Aytoun's lines:—

> "All night long the northern streamers
> Shot athwart the trembling sky;
> Fearful lights, which never beckon
> Save when kings and heroes die."[1]

If the esteem of his fellow-countrymen can make a man a hero, then was Palmerston one. No attempt has been made in these pages to palliate or conceal his errors as a Minister, or even the occasional want of sincerity to Parliament and public. They were blemishes in a great career, and might not have been so readily overlooked in one of less unfailing amiability and kindly humour. Neither Scot nor Irishman will grudge attributing Palmerston's universal popularity to the fact that he was such a thorough Englishman. He was content to know that the country was prospering and its wealth increasing, without endeavouring restlessly to enhance his own reputation by launching heroic schemes. Mr. Justin M'Carthy considers that Palmerston's statesmanship "lowered the whole tone of English politics for a time," and that he was hardly to be considered a great man.[2] It is one of the vices of a popular form of government that it encourages the mis-

[1] *Edinburgh after Flodden*, stanza 1.
[2] *History of our Own Times*, iii. 243.

chievous belief that no politician can be ranked as "great" who has not associated his name with great changes; yet he who builds and maintains an embankment perhaps renders greater service than he who opens the flood-gates.

The only changes in the Cabinet following on the removal of its chief were the appointment of Lord Russell as Prime Minister and that of Lord Clarendon to the Foreign Office.[1] But the new House of Commons assembled under greatly altered conditions. The place of its old leader—the safe, the leisurely, the rest-and-be-thankful "Old Pam" —was filled by one for whom the most irreverent Tory would never dare to coin an endearing nickname—the restless, ardent, uncertain Gladstone. It was the dawn of a new era, chilling some men to the marrow, filling others with high hopes of a stirring noon. Conservatives were dispirited and anxious, afraid of what might be coming, a fear which imparted to party feeling a bitterness from which it had been free since the great fight over free trade. Radicals, on the other hand, were sanguine and jubilant. Reinforced in numbers and relieved of the discouraging weight of Palmerston's prestige, they had at last a leader in power after their own hearts, and what might not be accomplished under such an one? Vote by ballot, clipping the claws of the Lords, disestablishment of churches, manhood suffrage—besides numberless other wrongs, real or imaginary, which awaited righting. More than thirty years had gone by since the great Reform Act, and Radicals felt bitterly that they had been balked of the fruits thereof. The £50 county franchise, they complained, had only increased the influence of territorial magnates. The middle classes, so soon as they had secured free trade (at the hands of a Tory Minister, too), had shown a disappointing preference for moderate measures and a profound suspicion of extreme men. The first thing to be done, therefore, was to stiffen Parliament by a fresh draft from what Carlyle termed "the collective wisdom of individual ignorances."

Lord Russell's last Administration, Oct. 1865–June 1866.

[1] Mr. Goschen was taken in as Chancellor of the Duchy in 1866.

There was not much to be hoped from Russell, erewhile champion of the unenfranchised. He was at the head of the Government, true, but he was verging on seventy-four, and of late years had concentrated the energy left to him on foreign affairs. Gladstone is the man for our business; see how he scandalised his Whig colleagues by advocating manhood suffrage from the Treasury bench! But even Gladstone, fiercely earnest though he was, had disappointment in store for the Radicals. The Bill which he introduced on 12th March 1866 went no further than lowering the borough franchise from £10 to £7 and the county franchise from £50 to £14, thereby adding, it was reckoned, about 400,000 voters to the electorate. Even for such moderate change a Palmerstonian Parliament proved unready. From the first it was clear that opposition would not be found only on Conservative benches. In fact, Derby and Disraeli took some time to consider how, as authors of the Bill of 1859, which Disraeli had recommended to the House as "more important than peace or war," they could with any show of consistency recommend their friends to oppose this one. Not until 16th March,—four days after the attack had been led by two Liberals, Robert Lowe and Edward Horsman, did they hold a meeting of the party in Arlington Street, where it was resolved to co-operate with the dissentient Liberals.

The Reform Bill of 1866.

The debates remain memorable for the unusual excellence of the speeches on either side. They made the reputation of one who, although he had been fourteen years in Parliament and had held high office for two-thirds of that time, had given hitherto no indication of latent powers beyond the common. Robert Lowe, having started in life as a barrister in Sydney, afterwards sitting for seven years on the Legislative Council of New South Wales, had conceived a deep-rooted distrust of democratic government. In opposing the Bill he rose to levels of sarcasm, invective, and admonition which placed him for the time on no unequal ground with Gladstone and Bright. The debates are memorable for more than eloquence—for the far rarer quality of wit. One sally of

Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke, 1811-92.

Mr. Bright gave birth to a permanent parliamentary phrase. It may be assumed, I think, that hardly any measure of drastic change would pass through the House of Commons if the votes of members were given by ballot. That, at least, is the impression left on the understanding of the present writer after a quarter of a century's personal experience of that chamber. On this occasion Lowe's courage proved contagious. Some forty or fifty Liberals found the hardihood to give effect to their convictions by rallying to him and Horsman. On the second night of the first reading debate Bright flung at Lowe the taunt that he had "retired into his political cave of Adullam, and he has called about him every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented."[1] The issue was joined on a motion of one of the Adullamites, Lord Grosvenor, that the House declined to proceed with the Bill until the Government had produced their plan for redistributing seats. There was fine sword play, plenty of smoke and noise, too, between the foremost fighters—"Lowe had such a command of the House," wrote Gladstone in after years, "as had never in my recollection been surpassed"—but the country remained indifferent; members in general reflected its apathy; the Cabinet itself was not agreed upon the expediency of thrusting the franchise upon people who showed no particular wish for it. The Bill was foredoomed; after eight nights of warm debate, Ministers snatched a precarious victory by a majority of five votes. This was virtual defeat; there was not the faintest chance that the measure could survive the ordeal of Committee; yet Russell and Gladstone—rather Gladstone plus Russell—persuaded a reluctant Cabinet to persevere; which they did, even after the Government were left in a minority of ten on 28th May, until the end came on 18th June, when Gladstone hauled

[1] 1 Samuel xxii. 1, 2. The thrust was a shrewd one, owing to the circumstances of Lowe's resignation in 1864. He had been Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education since 1859, and resigned in consequence of a vote of censure on his administration having been carried by a majority of eight. He was known to have resented the lukewarm defence made for him by Palmerston and Gladstone on that occasion; and some did not hesitate to impute personal motives to him in his attack on the Reform Bill. But Gladstone freely acquitted him of any "dishonesty of purpose or *arrière pensée*" (Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 201).

down his colours before an adverse majority of eleven votes on an amendment moved by Lord Dunkellin.[1]

The Russell Cabinet resigns, 19th June 1866.

The Queen was at distant Balmoral when she received the resignation of her Ministers. She besought Russell to reconsider his position in view of the exceedingly critical state of affairs on the Continent. Prussia and Austria had quarrelled over the disposal of spoil reft from Denmark, and Bismarck, making a pretext of an alleged infringement of the treaty of Gastein, had forced his master into war. It called for the utmost vigilance and tact to prevent Great Britain being drawn into the conflict, for Bismarck, by a long premeditated series of overtures, which, for successful guile, have few counterparts in the annals of clandestine statecraft, had flattered Louis Napoleon into complete acquiescence and ruined his good understanding with England. Surely, urged the Queen, at such a time Ministers will not precipitate a crisis on what is, after all, only a matter of detail. Russell accordingly held a council with his colleagues, but it was manifest that only he and Gladstone were in earnest about the Bill. Unofficial Radicals were clamant for a dissolution, though the parliament was not a year old; but the party whips were strongly against it, and it was on their advice that the Government determined not to withdraw their resignation.[2] And so ended Lord Russell's long public service, a career which somehow missed the level to which his advantages and attainments had promised to raise it. Born in the purplest of Whig purple, with natural abilities far more varied, with acquired culture far richer—advantages from family influence far more potent—than Palmerston had at command, and without Palmerston's domineering wilfulness, he never enjoyed more than a fraction of that popularity and power which came to Palmerston in such ample measure. Indispensable to every Liberal Cabinet for five-and-thirty years, he had become associated in the mind of the public with the failures of his party more than with its successes—un-

[1] There were forty-four Adullamites or dissentient Liberals in the Opposition lobby.

[2] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 210.

gratefully remembered as the betrayer of Denmark rather than as a pioneer in reform.[1] Members of a party who have the hardihood to give effect to their dissent from the policy of their leaders have to endure reproach far more bitter than that bestowed upon the regular opposition; but the chastisement is generally left to those officially charged with party discipline. Gladstone put plenty of fire into his fight for the Bill, but he never stooped to impute dishonourable motives to the Adullamites. Lord Russell showed less magnanimity. Writing after his retirement from office, he compared Robert Lowe to Achitophel, and wound up an acrid complaint against the other "bandits" by declaring that "of the three gangs which issued from the Cave of Adullam, the timid inspire pity, the selfish indignation, the timid and selfish contempt."[2]

Once more it became Lord Derby's lot to form a stop-gap administration with a hostile majority in the Commons. Lowe and the Adullamites declined his overtures for coalition, and no sooner had he got together a purely Conservative Cabinet, early in July, than the unenfranchised suddenly woke from their indifference to electoral reform and fiercely demanded what Gladstone and Bright had succeeded at last in convincing them was essential to their well-being. Their desire for the boon had been but languid while it was dangling before them, but when it was snatched away and the blowpipe of platform oratory had inflamed their passion,[3] there followed some manifestations faintly reflecting the bale-fires of 1831–32.

Lord Derby's Third Administration, 1866–68.

It is doubtful whether political agitators would have prevailed to unsettle the masses, had not the materials of unrest been suddenly increased by a serious commercial panic which convulsed London and other industrial centres in the early summer,

Commercial crisis, May–June 1866.

[1] Unjustly so. Russell and Palmerston were quite ready to go to war in fulfilment of the pledge to Denmark. Russell bore the brunt of unpopularity because he happened to be in charge of foreign affairs at the time.

[2] *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 289.

[3] Mr. Gladstone took no part in the agitation, but went off to Italy for a much-needed holiday, leaving "the wound of the Liberal party to the healing powers of Nature" (Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 214).

paralysing trade and throwing a vast number of hands idle. This crisis, violently interrupting a period of unprecedented prosperity, was brought about by headlong speculation, the combined effect of active trade and the new law of limited liability. It burst upon the community on 10th May, when the great discount firm of Overend and Gurney suspended payment, with liabilities estimated at nineteen millions sterling. This was followed in the same week by the failure of several banks. After the Bank of England had advanced more than four millions to tide other banks over their difficulties and, notwithstanding that the rate of discount was raised to 10 per cent., was left with less than three millions in reserve, the Bank Charter Act was suspended for the third and last time during the century. The scenes of wild and unreasoning panic in the City recalled traditions of the South Sea Bubble.

All this dire commotion was running its course while the House of Commons was busy with the Reform Bill. The trucidation of that measure was the signal for organising reform meetings all over the country. It was too late in the session, of course, to expect anything from Parliament, but the agitation brought into relief the weakness of one most worthy member of the Cabinet. The Reform League having announced that a demonstration in favour of manhood suffrage would be held in Hyde Park on 23rd July, the Home Secretary, Mr. Spencer Walpole, issued a notice prohibiting the meeting, and directed that the park gates should be closed at five o'clock. His predecessor in office, Sir George Grey, had instructed the Commissioner of Police that no political meetings were to be permitted in the parks; but, although the parks were Crown property, Mr. Beales, President of the League, a barrister of some standing, probably was right in contending that the Home Secretary was acting beyond his rights, as the event proved him to be exceeding his powers. Setting the Home Office at defiance, Beales declared that the demonstration would be held, were it only to vindicate a public right. Accordingly a procession with bands and banners arrived before

The Hyde Park riot, 23rd July 1866.

the closed gates, demanded entrance, and, when the police refused it, attempted to storm them. The attempt was foiled; whereupon Beales called upon the crowd to follow him to Trafalgar Square, where an indignation meeting would be held. But, as is usual on such occasions, the mass of demonstrators cared little for the ostensible purpose of the gathering; thousands of idlers and roughs had come for an outing on a summer evening, and were not to be balked of the fun by a few hundred policemen. Beales and the earnest reformers adjourned to Trafalgar Square, where they passed resolutions to their hearts' content; the irresponsible part of the crowd continued to throng the streets alongside of the park. The gates were stout enough to resist the pressure, but the railings were old and frail. People felt them shake and creak; half-a-dozen stout fellows set shoulders against them in Park Lane; a breach was made; in five minutes the whole length from Hamilton Gardens to the Marble Arch went down, and the park was filled with a tumultuous, rollicking mob. No other harm was done except to the flower-beds; the police made a few arrests, and the crowd dispersed quietly at nightfall. But the effect on amiable, gentle Mr. Walpole's nerves was unfortunate. Having invited Beales and a small deputation to confer with him next day, he consented to withdraw the troops and police, and shed those tears which people have come to associate as closely with the Hyde Park riot as Nero's fiddle with the burning of Rome.

Beales soon after earned the glory of martyrdom, thereby securing the demagogue's reward. He was revising barrister for Middlesex, an office which debars the holder from taking any public part in political controversy. The appointment is an annual one, and when it came to be renewed the Lord Chief-Justice, Sir Alexander Cockburn, very properly refused to reappoint a gentleman who had so flagrantly departed from the obligations of his office. This was vehemently denounced as an instance of Tory vindictiveness, and Beales became the Radical darling of the hour. But he did not suffer long. When the Liberals returned to power, Beales exchanged the martyr's crown for a county court judgeship.

Fate dealt less kindly with Mr. Walpole. The *Times* lashed him unmercifully, and Walpole bowed his head to the storm. It is true that he continued for some months at the Home Office; and in May 1867, when the Reform League announced that another meeting would be held in Hyde Park, by instruction of the Cabinet he issued a notice warning all persons against attending it. But this was mere *brutum fulmen;* for it had been ascertained by this time that the only bar to the public use of the royal parks for meetings, political or otherwise, consisted in the law of trespass. Now trespass, popular belief notwithstanding, can only be prohibited by injunction in England and interdict in Scotland, neither injunction nor interdict being operative against the general public, only against specified individuals. So, when the League persisted in holding the demonstration, it was announced in both Houses of Parliament that it would not be interfered with, and the meeting was held and passed off peaceably.

All this had the appearance of unpardonable indecision on the part of the Government, arousing no little indignation in sections of the press and the public—indignation which was focussed on the unfortunate Walpole. We have all read his son's loyal vindication of him;[1] but, with all sympathy for the Minister's singularly amiable and honourable character, one cannot exonerate him from the chief responsibility. A Cabinet is entitled to expect sure guidance in matters of domestic order from the head of the Home Office. Mr. Walpole had misled his colleagues, and having got into his head the conviction, surely a groundless one, that Disraeli had inspired the *Times* in its attack upon his administration, he resigned the seals of the Home Office in favour of Mr. Gathorne-Hardy, retaining a seat in the Cabinet without portfolio. When Disraeli became Prime Minister in the following year Walpole left the Cabinet altogether, rather than serve under a colleague whom he believed to have been disloyal to him.

Before parting with Mr. Walpole the Conservative Cabinet had sustained a far more serious loss.

[1] *History of Twenty-five Years*, ii. 194, 199.

For the fifth time in fifteen years, the Queen's Speech of 1867 announced that Parliament would be asked to take into consideration the representation of the people. Ministers of later years may heave an envious sigh on being reminded that on this occasion the House of Commons voted the Address unanimously after a single night's debate, without any amendment having been moved. On strict party lines, Lord Derby's Government was in a considerable minority in the House of Commons, but it could reckon on securing a handsome majority for an enfranchising Bill, provided a measure could be prepared to meet with general approval. Disraeli therefore proceeded to reconnoitre the ground by means of thirteen resolutions, the fate of which may serve to corroborate the popular prejudice against that discredited number.

The Derby-Disraeli Reform Bill, Feb. 1867.

The Cabinet had before them the drafts of two Bills—a large measure of enfranchisement, and another, less large, embodying Disraeli's resolutions. The Commons had shown so much disinclination to waste time in discussing abstract resolutions, and so much eagerness to get to work on a Bill, that on Saturday, 23rd February, the Cabinet agreed unanimously to withdraw the resolutions and introduce the larger measure of reform on Monday 25th. On the morning of that Monday two Secretaries of State, the Lords Cranborne[1] and Carnarvon, informed the Prime Minister that, upon reflection, they could not support the Bill and felt compelled to resign. General Peel, Secretary of State for War,[2] upon hearing this, handed in his resignation also.

Secession of three Secretaries of State, 25th Feb. 1867.

The defection of three colleagues on the morning of battle seemed enough to upset any Government. Had there been time, the introduction of the Bill might have been postponed to allow of negotiation with the malcontents; but time was not to be had. Derby and Disraeli, practised tacticians as they were, decided upon a rapid and hazardous change of front to avert what promised to be a disastrous

[1] Succeeded his father as 3rd Marquess of Salisbury in 1868.

[2] Younger brother of the deceased Sir Robert Peel.

rupture of the Ministry. A Cabinet was called for 12.30 o'clock; the summons did not reach some of the Ministers till past noon; it was 1.30 before they were all assembled in Lord Derby's house, and a meeting of the Conservative party was to be held in Downing Street at 2.30 to have the Government Bill explained to them. The scene was described, with unusual disregard of official reticence, by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir John Pakington of Crystal Palace renown,[1] in a speech to his constituents at Droitwich:—

"Imagine the difficulty and embarrassment in which the Ministry found themselves placed. Literally we had not half-an-hour; we had not ten minutes to make up our minds as to what course the Ministry were to adopt. . . . We determined to propose, not the Bill agreed to on Saturday, but an alternative measure which we had contemplated, in the event of our large and liberal scheme being rejected by the House of Commons. . . . We are now told that the course we took was vacillating and considered chiefly with a view to keeping the Cabinet together. Whether, if the Ministry had had an hour for consideration, we would have taken that course, is perhaps a question. But we did not possess that hour, and were driven to decide upon a line of definite action within the limits of little more than ten minutes."

The manœuvre proved a failure. The House of Commons received the proposals of the Government with manifest disapproval; even the Conservatives, holding conference at the Carlton, condemned a makeshift measure. Finality in such matters is not to be looked for; but let us have a Bill with *some* elements of durability in it. So front was changed once again; the three Secretaries of State were cast adrift, and the House settled down to deal with the larger measure of the Government. In accepting numerous amendments and framing others to meet the demands of the Opposition, Disraeli showed pliancy little to the liking either of the Adullamites or of his own party.

Abolition of the compound householder, 1867.

Indeed, the chief concession he made went far beyond what Gladstone and the bulk of his party were ready to grant. It was upon the position of what was called the compound householder—that is, the individual who made no personal pay-

[1] He was transferred to the War Office upon General Peel's resignation.

ment of rates, but paid a lump sum as rent, leaving the landlord to settle with the rate-collector. Now the Government had declared that personal payment of rates was to be a cardinal requirement of every parliamentary voter; to waive that qualification would go, to quote Gladstone's own words, "beyond the wants and wishes of the time." Yet when an obscure private member[1] moved an amendment abolishing compounding in parliamentary boroughs, thereby making every householder personally responsible for the rates, to the amazement of the Opposition, the dismay of his own people, and without consulting the Cabinet, Disraeli calmly accepted it. When the Bill left the House of Commons its original authors might have been puzzled to recognise it. It conferred household suffrage in the widest sense upon the boroughs, fixing £12 as the qualification of occupiers in counties. "No doubt," said Lord Derby on the third reading in the Lords, repeating a phrase used by Lord Cranborne in the other House—"no doubt we are making a great experiment and taking a leap in the dark; but I have the greatest confidence in the sound sense of my fellow-countrymen."

The question remains whether any pressure of circumstances could justify the rulers of the Empire in taking a deliberate leap in the dark. Within twelve months they had, when in opposition, overturned a Government by throwing out a Bill which would have added less than half a million voters to the register. Succeeding to office, if not to power, they had carried a measure which increased the electorate by nearly a million by the admission of the poorest class of voters in towns. Granted that the anomalies of the franchise of 1832 had long been waiting for adjustment, granted that a Conservative ministry had acted rightly in attempting to adjust them in 1859, can justification be found for the abandonment in committee of the principal safeguard against the admission of what John Bright termed "the residuum"—the hopeless, shiftless dregs of town population, who could only be classed as householders because the law would not suffer them to lie abroad? Unhappily, one has been left in no doubt as to

[1] Mr. Hodgkinson, M.P. for Newark.

the unworthy motives of the Ministry in making this dive into the lucky-bag of the populace. Passing over the casual remark attributed to Lord Derby, who, when somebody observed to him that the measure was dangerously democratic, is reported to have replied, "Well, anyhow, we have dished the Whigs!"—passing that over as *obiter dictum* in the moment of a party victory—we turn to the same nobleman's deliberate explanation of motive as set forth in his speech on the second reading of the Bill. After referring to the position in which he found himself for the third time, namely, at the head of a Government which was in a minority in the House of Commons, he went on to say:—

"I did not intend for a third time to be made a mere stopgap until it should suit the convenience of the Liberal party to forget their dissension, and bring forward a measure which should oust us from office and replace them there; and *I determined that I would take such a course as would convert, if possible, an existing majority into a practical minority.*"

After that authoritative statement no Conservative can complain of the view expressed by Mr. Gladstone in the fragmentary retrospect upon this period which he jotted down after his final retirement from public life:—

"The governing idea of the man [Disraeli] who directed the party seemed to be not so much to consider what ought to be proposed and carried, as to make sure that, whatever it was, it should be proposed and carried by those now in power." [1]

Upon no period in the history of his party can a Conservative reflect with so little satisfaction as he is forced to do upon this. The very men who had availed themselves of honest Liberal support to prevent a moderate extension of the franchise in 1866 did not scruple to throw over their allies in 1867 in order to outbid their rivals for the popular vote. Quiet and staunch Conservatives were bewildered by the manœuvre; it was no exaggerated description of the action of their leaders which appeared in the *Times* over the initial of a well-known

[1] Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 224.

Liberal—"It is not a party they have destroyed; it is a creed that they have annihilated."[1] Bewilderment was changed to disgust and indignation when Disraeli, claiming credit for his performance before an Edinburgh audience, declared that, before carrying his Reform Bill, he had "to prepare the mind of the country, and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party." The feeling of that party was as strong against Disraeli as it had been against Peel in 1846; but Disraeli was more adroit than Peel in managing the House of Commons. He managed to keep his followers together there; but outside the House, Conservatives felt they had less to fear from Gladstone than from their own leaders. But at this time Gladstone also was casting loose from his moorings, to enter upon a course which, by directly menacing cherished institutions and established rights, forced the Conservatives to close their ranks and act on the defensive.

Before entering upon the new era created by the Reform Act of 1867, brief notice must be given to some salient points in the crowded record of our people.

In 1837 an officer of the Indian army, William Fothergill Cooke,[2] collaborating with a musical instrument maker named Charles Wheatstone,[3] patented the first workable telegraphic apparatus. Many busy brains and hands were occupied simultaneously on the problem of instantaneous communication by electricity, to which the rapid development of railways at this time gave peculiar importance. Besides the results achieved by Laplace, Ampère, Schilling, Steinheil, and other European electricians, and by Morse the American, an English clergyman, the Rev. Henry Highton, and his brother Edward invented recording telegraphs about the same time as Cooke and Wheatstone. Step by step the instruments were brought to perfection and the methods of signalling simplified, until these islands were covered from end to end with a network of wires connected with nearly every part of Europe. The effect upon com-

Invention and development of electric telegraphy, 1837-66.

[1] Mr., afterwards Sir William, Vernon Harcourt, *Times*, 2nd May 1867.
[2] Knighted in 1869, d. 1879.
[3] Knighted in 1868, d. 1875.

merce may be realised by imagining what would be the position of traders at the present day if telegraphic communication were suddenly to come to a universal stoppage and the mails become once more the only medium of correspondence. But vast tracts of the Queen's dominions still lay outside the system, and the abysmal Atlantic had hitherto baffled every attempt to unite the Old World with the New. Baffled, but not for long; what seemed at first to many wise men the extravagant dream of the American Cyrus Field, became a permanent reality within ten years after it was undertaken. On 7th August 1857 two ships of war, the American *Niagara* and the British *Agamemnon*, began paying out a cable from the Irish coast. On the 11th, after 380 miles had been laid, the cable parted at a depth of 2000 fathoms, and operations had to be postponed till the following year, when the two ships, each carrying 1500 miles of cable, met in mid-ocean, spliced the two cables, and parted in opposite directions, east and west. Three times the cable broke, and thrice the ships returned to their rendezvous. On 5th August the *Niagara* anchored in Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, having successfully laid 1016 miles of cable, and on the same day the *Agamemnon* arrived off Valentia, having laid 1020 miles. Messages of congratulation were exchanged through the cable between the Queen and President Buchanan, and bitter was the chagrin when immediately afterwards the current slackened, grew feebler, and finally ceased altogether.

Laying the Atlantic cable, Aug. 1857–28th July 1866.

For seven years the scheme was abandoned; but Mr. Cyrus Field would not own himself beaten. In 1864 a new company was formed; the *Great Eastern* steamship, the largest vessel in the world, was chartered and fitted with the necessary machinery, and began paying out the new cable on 15th July. It parted, after 1212 miles had been laid; but a new cable was made during the winter, which the great ship began laying from Berehaven on 12th July 1866. Early on the morning of the 28th a welcome message reached the anxious staff at Valentia, announcing that the cable had been spliced to the shore end at Trinity Bay. This time there was no flaw in the

communication, and, later in the season, a feat hardly less wonder-stirring was accomplished in the recovery of the broken cable of 1865 from a depth of 3900 fathoms (about four miles and one-third), which was spliced and finished, thereby effecting a second line of communication between the two continents.

This great achievement, first conceived in the brain of an American citizen and carried to completion through his indomitable confidence in the resources of applied science, coincided felicitously with the culmination of a spontaneous movement on the part of legislatures and people towards the federation of all the British colonies in North America. The question of such a union had been floating in the minds of leading men in Canada and Nova Scotia ever since the founders of the constitution of the United States made provision for the admission of Canada to their federation. It received a notable impetus from the tenour of Lord Durham's report in 1839; ten years later the North American League was formed to promote the cause of federation; in 1854 and 1857 the legislature of Nova Scotia passed resolutions in favour thereof, and urged the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Labouchere,[1] to take such action as might bring it about. Next year the Canadian ministry followed suit; but the Imperial Government wisely refrained from interference, partly out of deference to colonial initiative, and partly, it must be confessed, out of indifference to what course the colonies chose to pursue. The impression prevailed at that time among public men of all parties that, sooner or later, the Dominion of Canada would decide to "cut the painter," not by rebellion, indeed, but with the frank assent of the Imperial Government. The sentiment binding Canadians to the mother-land was still warm and strong, but sentiment is apt to be intermittent; the one durable and practical bond of union is common interest. On the one hand, the gates still stood wide for the admission of Canadians to the powerful republic on their

Federation of the North American colonies, 1867.

[1] Created Lord Taunton in 1859; d. 1869.

southern frontier; on the other hand, destiny seemed to be beckoning them to take their place among the independent nations. British statesmen had come to contemplate these alternatives, if not with complacency, at all events without apprehension. A parent need not take offence because his children choose to set up in life for themselves; if he makes a quarrel over it, future relations between them will be the reverse of comfortable, as was the case with England and the United States for the best part of a hundred years. On the whole, if the painter was to be cut, it were better for the balance of power that Canada should become an independent republic, rather than that she should increase the power of the United States, already formidable enough. Federation of the British North American provinces would smooth the way to independence rather than to incorporation; therefore, when the question was reopened in 1864, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Cardwell, took it up with enthusiasm, and before the fall of Russell's Government in 1866 a scheme of federation had been prepared, uniting all the possessions of the Crown in North America in a single dominion, except British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, which expressed no desire to join the union.

The authors of a measure to effect this had quitted office before it could be laid before Parliament, wherefore it fell to the lot of Lord Carnarvon to introduce the Federation Bill before he resigned the seals of the Colonial Office in February 1867. It received cordial approval from all parties; objection being raised by the economists on one point only, an important one, closely affecting the feasibility of the scheme. The chief physical obstacle to federation was the vast distances separating the centres of population and the absence of ready means of transit. To overcome this a line of railway had been surveyed uniting Halifax to Quebec, a distance of 470 miles, estimated to cost four millions sterling. The Imperial Parliament was asked to guarantee interest upon three-quarters of the capital required, leaving one million to be raised by the Canadian Government. John Bright

and Robert Lowe were foremost opponents of the Bill;[1] nevertheless, on a division only 67 votes were cast against 237 supporting the measure. Something to balance the risk undertaken by the Imperial Treasury was provided in the decision to withdraw 12,000 or 14,000 regular troops which, up to this time, had been maintained for the defence of Canada. In undertaking to guard their own frontier, the inhabitants of the Dominion have proved their serious purpose. Under the name of a Militia, the Dominion Government maintains at the present day an army of 54,000 of all arms, with a reserve of about one million.[2]

The Fenian Brotherhood, 1858–67.

At the very time when this great scheme for consolidating the outworks of the Empire was being matured, a conspiracy for disunion at its heart passed into an active phase. The stream of westward emigration setting in after the Irish famine of 1848 had created a very large Irish population in the United States. These emigrants nourished a bitter grudge against England, whom they were taught to hold accountable for all the sufferings of their own people. They had found in America, had they known it, the true remedy for their misfortunes; for in moving to that rich and spacious land, where unskilled labour was in constant demand, they left behind them those hardships which must always afflict a congested population with no regular outlet for its energy. But still they loved old Ireland and hated England, and finding themselves of political importance in the New World (for the Irish vote soon became indispensable to the

[1] Among the less known members who opposed it were Mr. Cave, who, claiming to speak from personal acquaintance with the country, declared that the line would lead from nowhere to nowhere, and Mr. Aytoun, who predicted that as a commercial speculation it would never pay for its own grease. There are now about 26,500 miles of railway open in the Dominion, and about 3000 miles under construction.

[2] The enlarged Dominion at first included only Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick; but the door was left open for the admission of the other British provinces at their own time. The charter of the Hudson Bay Company lapsing in 1869, their territory was formed into the province of Manitoba and admitted to the Dominion in 1870. British Columbia and Vancouver Island were admitted in 1871, and Prince Edward Island in 1873. Only Newfoundland still remains outside the federation; the total area of the Dominion is almost equal to the whole of Europe.

Democratic party), they lent a ready ear to projects for the liberation of their own country. Nor did they lack encouragement from Americans, so bitter a feeling against England remained in the Northern States for years after the close of the civil war. Thousands of Irishmen had learnt the use of arms in the Federal armies, and the Fenian Brotherhood, founded so far back as 1858, was reorganised under the able leadership of James Stephens, who had figured in the Young Ireland disturbance of 1848. The machinery of a provisional government of Ireland, complete in all its details, was established in New York; ample funds poured into the treasury, every Irish man and maid in America contributing willingly to the glorious cause of freedom. Hundreds of American Irish, mostly old soldiers of the civil war, were sent across the Atlantic to scatter themselves in every district of Ireland and prepare the way for a rising. Special precautions had been taken against informers; but, as usual in these conspiracies, the Government were kept fully acquainted with every step in the movement. When the Head Centre, James Stephens himself, arrived in Dublin in November 1865, he was promptly arrested and clapped into Richmond gaol. All Ireland was convulsed with delight when he escaped from prison a few days later; and although £1000 was offered for his recapture, the authorities never could lay hands upon him again. Meanwhile the Fenians in America had fallen to loggerheads in the absence of their Head Centre. Stephens had always opposed the project of invading Canada; but no sooner was his back turned than some 1200 Fenians crossed the Niagara River in May 1866, occupied a fort, and defeated a force of Canadian volunteers. Prompt action on the part of President Andrew Johnson's cabinet prevented this exploit developing into a dangerous international dispute. The marauding band recrossed the river in disarray, and just as in 1838 the United States had acted in good faith during the Canadian rebellion, so now they took effective measures to prevent further violation of the frontier by American citizens. As for Stephens, he showed greater discretion than valour. He never reappeared among his

Fenian raid into Canada, May 1866.

deluded followers, though for long afterwards the Irish peasantry remained confident that the lost leader would return and lead them to victory. One brief experience of prison discipline had proved enough for this patriot chief, and he is believed to have spent the rest of his life on the Continent in comfortable circumstances, possessed of funds which had been entrusted to him by his dupes.

In February 1867 the Government received timely warning of a Fenian plot to seize Chester Castle. There were isolated risings, or attempted risings, in Kerry, Cork, Limerick, and Louth, causing the loss of a few lives, and a number of American-Irish emissaries were arrested both in Ireland and England. On 18th September a party of armed Fenians attacked in open day the driver and police escort of a prison van in which two of the "brotherhood" were being taken to gaol. In the scuffle a policeman was shot dead; the prisoners were rescued, and never recaptured; but twenty-six of the miscreants were apprehended and tried by a special commission. Five of the number were convicted of murder, three of whom were hanged. Another attempted rescue entirely miscarried, though the loss of life was far greater than at Manchester. The scene was Clerkenwell gaol, where two Fenians were confined. About 4 P.M. on 12th December, the hour when prisoners were usually at exercise in the yard, a barrel of gunpowder was wheeled up against the outer wall and exploded, throwing down about sixty yards of masonry and wrecking several houses in the street. But for previous warning received by the governor, all the prisoners would have been in the yard at the time, and must almost certainly have been destroyed.[1] As it was, twelve innocent passers-by were killed and more than one hundred received injury. Six persons were tried for murder at the Central Criminal Court, of whom one was sent to the gallows.

Fenian plots and outrages in England, 1867.

The sources of Fenian outrages lay far in the West; the year 1867 did not run to its close without trouble arising

[1] The warning was that the wall was to be blown *up*, which caused the authorities to take precautions against mining. It never occurred to them that it might be blown *down*. (*Side-lights on the Home Rule Movement*, by Sir R. Anderson, p. 75.)

in the Eastern border of the Empire. Theodore, known among his Coptic Christian subjects as "Negus" or King-of-kings, and ruling in Abyssinia over a territory nearly as large as France, had been for several years cultivating the goodwill of the British Government, partly out of strong personal affection for Mr. Plowden, British Consul at Massowah, and partly in the hope of receiving support in disputes with his hereditary enemy, the Turk. Now Massowah is not Abyssinian territory, but Turkish; nevertheless Plowden rode with King Theodore upon an expedition against some rebels in 1860, and died of wounds received in action. Captain Cameron, succeeding him in the consulate, received strict instructions not to take any part in the political affairs of Abyssinia, and to confine himself to his duty, which was to facilitate British trade with that and the neighbouring countries. King Theodore conceived a vehement dislike to the new Consul, and his feelings towards England underwent a change when he received no answer to a letter he addressed to Queen Victoria in 1861, requesting her aid against the Turks. In 1865 Theodore caused Cameron to be seized, chained, and imprisoned; envoys sent to demand his release were treated likewise. Altogether there were about thirty captives, three of whom being British subjects, Lord Stanley sent an ultimatum demanding their release within three months under penalty of invasion. It was a ticklish mission to convey despatches to this tyrant in his rock-fortress, and it is believed that Theodore never received the summons. If he did receive it, he treated it with contempt; wherefore Parliament met in November to vote money for an expedition to Magdala, consisting of 12,000 Indian troops, which were placed under the command of Sir Robert Napier, commander-in-chief of the Bombay army. The work was thoroughly well done; transport and commissariat were admirably organised, and the apparent ease with which Napier achieved his purpose has tended to stint him of full credit for accomplishing an exceedingly difficult task. Landing at Annesley Bay in the Gulf of Aden, the column traversed four hundred miles of mountain and desert, encountering

The Abyssinian war, 1867–68.

Theodore's army under the walls of Magdala on 10th April 1868. The Abyssinians fought with desperate valour, but they could not prevail against modern firearms handled by Indian soldiers. Not until some two thousand of them had fallen did they leave the field to Napier, who did not lose a single man killed, and only nineteen wounded.

The fierce old king so far accepted this punishment as to release the captives; but as he refused to surrender, it was deemed necessary to enforce the lesson that if Great Britain will not lightly take up arms, neither will she lay them down without exacting complete submission. Magdala had to be stormed. Set high on a precipitous rock, it was deemed by the Abyssinians to be impregnable; and so it was, saving through famine or modern siege engines. Few are now the places which can refuse admission to resolution combined with science. When the northern gate was stormed, the King-of-kings was found within stretched in death. He had perished by his own hand.

END OF VOL. II


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Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

Telegrams :
'Scholarly, London.
Telephone :
No. 1883 Mayfair.

41 and 43 Maddox Street,
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